

St Gabriel's C of E Primary School



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2018

Good attendance and punctuality to school are essential for students to achieve their full potential and gain from all areas of school life.

At St Gabriel's CE Primary School, parents and teachers work together to achieve good attendance and punctuality. We wish for children to reach their full potential, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically. We wish for all children to develop good habits to help them to become supportive, caring, reliable and responsible adults. We promote good attendance and punctuality to help achieve these aims.

Responsibilities and duties of parents

From the term after a child's fifth birthday, the law requires school-aged children to attend full time education and it is the responsibility of parents to ensure children attend school regularly (at least 95% attendance) and on time. The *Home School Agreement* clearly sets out St Gabriel's CE Primary School's expectation of parental responsibility to make sure that children attend at least 96% of the time and arrive at school on time. All parents are encouraged to sign the *Home School Agreement*.

Sickness and medical appointments

Children should stay home only in cases of real illness. Medical appointments should be arranged to take place outside of school hours to avoid missing the school day and should only be made during school hours in exceptional circumstances.

When parents are aware that their child is ill, they should send a note to the teacher or school office, or call the school office to make school aware of their child's absence. An explanation should be given. Please note that school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence if the explanation is questionable.

Parents must provide a medical note if their child requires more than two days' absence due to real illness.

Punctuality

Children who arrive after 9.10am will have their names recorded in the lateness book and persistent lateness will be followed up by the Headteacher. Parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss strategies to improve punctuality.

Any child arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as an **unauthorised** absence for the morning session.

Notification of absence

Parents should notify school of their child's absence prior to the start of the school day on which the child is absent by calling the school office, providing a note or speaking with the school office or class teacher in person. Parents should provide a reason for their child's absence at this time.

Where school have not received notification from a parent of their child's absence, the school office will telephone parents between 9.10am and 9.30am on the day of the child's absence. If no contact is made, parents should provide an explanation to school office staff or the class teacher on the child's first day of return to school. This will be recorded on the weekly sheet and formal records updated.

Responsibilities of the school

Registers must be completed accurately at the appropriate times

Registration of pupils is a legal requirement and takes place twice a day. Teachers must mark the register at the start of the school day and again after lunch. Pupils are marked by the class teacher as either present (X) or absent (A).

Registers are delivered to the office by two children from each class. The first is delivered by 9.10 am and the second at 1.25pm for KS1 and 1.40pm for KS2. Children who are missing after lunch must be reported to the office immediately.

If a child becomes unwell they should be sent to the office where their presence will be recorded by office staff.

Lateness must be identified on school records

School records must show if a pupil is late. If a pupil arrives between 9am and 9.30am, a recording of late (before registers close) is made. For children arriving after 9.30am, a recording of absent is made for the entire morning session.

Reasons for absence must be clearly explained in school records

Where the class teacher has been informed by a parent of the reason for a child's absence, the class teacher should record this on the weekly sheet found inside the Registration Folder. Where office staff are made aware of the reason for a child's absence, they will record this on the weekly sheet to make class teachers aware of reasons for absence.

If the school has not had an explanation within one week, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

School tracking and analyses of attendance

Attendance is tracked weekly by the Senior Admin Officer and the Headteacher. To ensure equal opportunities, pupil attendance will be analysed by ethnic group. The attendance of pupils with less than 90% will be analysed; specific days off and any patterns and reasons for absences will be investigated. High pupil absence will undoubtedly impact on pupil attainment and progress and so attendance is also

discussed half termly with the class teacher, head, SENCO and assessment lead during Pupil Progress Meetings.

Liaison with the local authority

School hold half termly meetings with the local authority's attendance service and Education Welfare Officer (EWO), now known as the Early Help Team. School are required by the local authority to report any child whose attendance is below 90% with no change after 6 weeks.

Children with less than 90% attendance will be discussed with the Early Help Team Officer, to ensure that support is given to families to enable regular attendance. In reference to the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and in consultation with the LA, a decision may be made to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under *Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003*. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that their child is in school. Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental co-operation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. Parent/carers and pupils are supported at school and Local Authority level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a range of assessment and intervention strategies. The issuing of a penalty notice may be considered appropriate in any of the following circumstances:

- cases of overt truancy
- cases of parentally condoned absence, where this can be demonstrated.
- instances where parents take children out of school for holidays/leave in term time, without the head teacher's approval
- instances of excessive delayed return from holidays/leave in term-time, without prior school agreement.
- Persistent lateness (unauthorised)
- Where a child has been excluded from school and is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification within the first five days of the exclusion period.

Both punctuality and attendance are monitored in order to ensure support and encouragement for children and families who have difficulty achieving consistent punctuality and over 95% attendance. We provide recognition for children and families who achieve consistent punctuality and 100% attendance.

The parents of a child with an attendance of less than 90% will receive a letter from the Senior Admin Officer. If attendance does not improve and there continues to be persistent absence, the Headteacher will invite parents in for a meeting and an attendance contract will be discussed and signed. The purpose of this is to ensure that children and families are supported in ensuring that the child is in school.

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. However, the Headteacher may authorise a leave of absence in very exceptional circumstances. If traveling abroad in holiday time, it

is important that families allow enough travel time and return to England in time for the start of the new school term.

If school are not made aware of a leave of absence and a pupil does not return to school within 20 days, the child's name may be removed from the school roll.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absence from school will be **authorised** for the following reasons:

- Real illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement (at the Headteachers discretion)
- If permission has been requested, and granted by the Headteacher for an educational visit

Absence from school will **not be authorised** for the following reasons:

- Caring for family members
- Birthdays
- Absence of uniform
- Over-sleeping or missing the bus/train
- Shopping or haircuts
- Head lice (nits). These should be treated immediately with conditioner and a fine tooth comb
- Family holidays
- Failure to provide an explanation

Strategies for promoting good attendance and punctuality

St Gabriel's CE Primary School aims to provide an environment where every child feels welcomed and valued, and knows that they will be missed if they are absent.

School apply the following strategies to encourage punctuality and attendance:

- Children and parents will be reminded of the importance and value of good attendance through assemblies, newsletters, during individual parent/teacher meetings and other means
- Classes with the best attendance will be praised
- Attendance figures will be displayed around the school and in Family Assemblies
- The Headteacher awards a class a certificate for every day that a class has 100% attendance
- If a class has 100% attendance for a week, the class receives a special certificate and the Attendance Cup to keep and display in their classroom

- When every pupil in a class is on time and present in a single day, the class is awarded a star that is used to cover a letter in the word 'excellent' which is displayed in the classroom. When all 9 letters are covered, £50 is awarded to the class, to be spent as a class
- All children with 100% attendance for a term will receive a certificate (handed out in the final week of term or first week of the following term). For one term's full attendance a Bronze Certificate is awarded; for two sequential terms of full attendance, a Silver Certificate; and for three sequential terms of full attendance, a Gold Certificate

The Policies Committee approved this policy in Spring 2016

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:

Reviewed Spring 2018

Appendix A

The following templates are based on the Tri-borough Penalty Notice Information Handbook



St Gabriel's CofE Primary Application for Leave During Term Time

PARENTS SECTION (to be completed first)

Parents/guardians must ask permission, where the situation is exceptional or urgent, for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Head teacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. If leave is taken without permission, or no application is made, parents risk being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted on their return. Parents wishing to apply for their child to have leave from school should complete this form and return it to school for authorisation where possible, 2 weeks before the proposed leave. It is important where possible that you meet with the headteacher to discuss this.

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth	Year	Class	
Full Name of parent/guardian			
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Reason for request:			
Departure Date	From (date)	To (date)	
Would your child miss any national tests or examinations?			Yes / No
Is his/her attendance above 95% over the past 12 months?			Yes / No
Has (s)he had leave during term-time in the last 12 months? (If so, please give dates, reasons, and number of school days leave)			Yes / No

SCHOOL SECTION

Leave in Term Time	(i) approved _____ school days	(ii) not approved _____ school days
Reasons:		
Date of Meeting with Parent		
Headteacher's signature	Date:	

On School Headed Paper.

Refusal of Leave of Absence Application Letter

Date:

Dear xxx,

Thank you for your letter regarding your permission to take xx out of school for the purposes From xx to xx.

I have considered your application and regret to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted for the following reasons:

- Your child's/children's attendance is below 95% this academic year.
- It is in the school's attendance policy not to authorise leave during term time except in **exceptional circumstances**. I am unable to authorise this leave as the reasons stated on your application form are not deemed as exceptional.
- xxx has already taken 10 days leave this academic year.
- Your request is for an important time of the academic year where students in your child's year group will be sitting exams.

I must warn you if you decide to take your children out of school for this period you may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

- £60.00 – if paid within 21 days of issue,
- £120.00 – if paid within 28 days of issue I have included a leaflet about this which has been issued by the Local Authority in response to parents who take their children out of school during term time.

Yours sincerely,

Xxx xxx
Head teacher
Xxx School.

On School Letter Head

Penalty Notice Letter to Parents following Unauthorised Leave

Date:

Dear xxx,

I write regarding your child's recent unauthorised absence from xx to xx. As you are aware, leave in term time is not permitted without the permission of the Head teacher as taking children out of school during term time disrupts their school routine and learning. Despite being informed of the school's policy and consequences for doing so you chose to continue to take xx on leave during term time without authorisation. As such you are now being referred for a Penalty Notice under Sec. 444a. of the Education Act (1996) for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child(ren).

The Penalty Notice is being requested in line with the Code of Conduct administered by (name of Council). If accepted, the notice will be sent to you in due course at which time details regarding the payment will be explained.

We thank you for your support in ensuring that your child is not absent from school during term time in future.

Yours sincerely,

xxx
Head teacher