



Policy Title	School Attendance Policy	Version	3.0
Reviewed by	Governing Body	Review Date	Term 1 22/23
Approved by	FGB		1 year cycle

Slimbridge Primary School

School Attendance Policy

Parents/carers have a legal and moral duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and on a full-time basis. At Slimbridge Primary School we believe that good attendance is vital to maximise educational opportunities and to allow each pupil to reach his or her full potential, we therefore **expect children to attend school every day** the school is open. Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance, under-achievement and social exclusion, whereas good attendance promotes social and academic progress and makes the learning experience more satisfying for children.

This policy has been written to adhere to the Education Act 1996, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and guidance from the Local Authority.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

At Slimbridge School aims for a minimum attendance of 95% for all children, except those with extenuating circumstances.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from the parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

- Only the school can make an absence authorised, not all absences requested will be classified as authorised. Holidays can only be authorised in authorised in extenuating circumstances.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason.

Procedures

The school is responsible for;

- To maintain appropriate registration processes
- To maintain appropriate attendance data
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school by 9.30 of the first day of absence.
- To discourage unnecessary absence during term times, e.g. holidays, medical appointments.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Education Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the LA and DFE

Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility for identifying a reporting trends in attendance and punctuality.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking for concerns, patterns and anomalies.
- Reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Supporting children and parent/carers to improve attendance
- Following up absences to ensure the correct coding

Head Teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised attendance and unauthorised attendance
- Contacting parents where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues

- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the LA Attendance team.

Administration staff

Staff in the Administration office are responsible for:

- Maintain attendance information
- Recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Providing attendance data and analysis

Parents

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the school by 9.30 on the first day of absence
- Informing the school, where possible, in advance of any medical appointments
- Signing a child in at the Administration Office if they have arrived **late**, i.e. after 8.50am (registers are kept open until 9.00am, after registers are closed children are marked as unauthorised unless they are absent for another reason)

Registration

The school is open from 8.30 am each morning, with the pedestrian gate closing at 8.50. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come to school and enter their classrooms from the playground.

Each teacher takes an electronic register between 8.45 and 9.00am and 1.00 and 1.10pm. All child present are recorded with / or \. Children who are absent must be recorded using the code system detailed below. If a teacher doesn't know the reason for absence this will be filled in by the administrator in discussion with the Head teacher.

The school uses SIMs software, which is supported by the Local authority. Attendance documents are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved securely on SIMs. No paper copies are held.

Lateness

Due to the disruption this causes, we actively discourage late arrivals. Once the gates are closed at 8.50am the only way into the school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school from 8.50am will be marked as late (L) in the attendance register. Records are kept on pupils who are late and if this becomes a concern parents will be sent a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Any child who arrives later than 9.00am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U or O).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have their absence marked as medical (Attendance code M).

Absence

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reasons for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information to ensure the absence is coded correctly. The Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence whilst talking to the parent/carer then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Administration staff check the registers from 9.00am to 9.30 am daily to identify pupils who are absent. If parents/carers have not contacted the school staff will phone or text all contact numbers, if they cannot make contact they will notify the Education Welfare Officer or if necessary Social Care.

Illness

If a child is prevented from attending school due to illness, and the school is satisfied with the explanation, the absence is authorised. If a child has repeated periods of illness over the course of the year, the school will request medical evidence for each further illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents/carers for the school to make contact with medical practitioners.

When children have an illness that results in longer term absence from school, the school will provide materials to enable them to keep up with their school work. If the child's absence will be over an extended period the school will contact support services to see if arrangements can be made to provide 1.1 tuition at home.

Granting approval for term-time absence.

Since September 2013 Head teachers have no longer had the right to authorise term-time absence, specifically for holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances for the absence.

Valid authorised absence may include:

- Family bereavements
- Religious observations
- Traveller families for occupational purposes.

Legal Sanctions

The school are required to notify the Local Authority of children of compulsory school age, who have had 10 sessions, the equivalent of 5 days, unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. In these cases the Local Authority will issue a penalty notice. The payment is made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices will be considered when;

- A child has 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10 week period.
- The child is out of school unauthorised for 10 sessions in one block.
- An excluded child is found in a public place during school time without justifiable reason.

The penalty notice will be issued to each parent with parental responsibility and parents have 21 days to pay the initial fine of £60 or £120 within 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local authority will decide whether to withdraw the notice or they will proceed to prosecuting the original offence in a magistrates' court, this could therefore result in a conviction.

Attendance monitoring

Administrative staff monitor attendance daily and provide regular updates to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will contact the parents/carers of children whose attendance falls below 90%, below 90% is considered 'persistent absenteeism'. Governors monitor attendance termly.

If after contacting parents a child's attendance does not improve the school will contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

All parents and carers are notified of their child's attendance annually in the written end of year report.

This policy is linked to;

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
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Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Letters

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Parents should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department for Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorising a leave of absence in term time only in “exceptional circumstances”.

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence the head teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates’ Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on the attached form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to maintain good levels of attendance and attainment.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Pupil NameClass/Tutor Group

Pupil's address

Date of first day of absenceDate of return to school

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

.....
.....
.....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer (s) making application:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:

Signed Dated

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Appendix 2 - Leave of Absence – when no request for leave was made by the parents but the head teacher has coded the absence as unauthorised family holiday (G Code). This would need to be sent to each of the parents the school intends to request a penalty notice for

Parent's address (formally served)

date

Dear (parent's name)

Re: Leave of absence without request

Child(ren)'s Name(s): Date(s) of Birth:

I am aware that your child(ren) was/were absent from school from (date) to (date). I have tried to contact you with regard to these absences but have been unsuccessful and now understand that you were on a family holiday. I believe this to be the case because.....

As you will be aware, as of 1st September 2013 Head Teachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional/unavoidable circumstances. It is also stated in our school policy that all requests for leave of absence should be made in writing, in advance of the proposed absence.

As we are unaware of any exceptional circumstances that might apply, the absence has **not been authorised**. However, if you feel that the absence was due to an exceptional circumstance or illness, please provide supporting evidence to this effect no later than (Date – **allow two weeks**) and I may be able to reconsider my decision.

I must warn you that failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school is an offence under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996. The Supreme Court Judgement from 2017 (Isle of Wight Council v Platt [2017] UKSC 28) has determined that 'regular' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

If the reasons given for your child(ren)'s absence from school are not considered to be exceptional (and therefore the absence is unauthorised) then I may request, without further warning, that the Local Authority take legal proceedings against you for your failure to comply with the law. This may result in:

A Penalty Notice requiring the payment of a penalty of up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due may result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.

Please refer to the school's attendance policy (available on our website and in hard copy upon request) and Gloucestershire County Council's website for further information.

If you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 3 - **Sample warning letter in respect of penalty notices for persistent lateness (U code).**

(This will need to be set to any parent that the school subsequently names in any request for a penalty notice).

Date

Name

Address

Dear (Name)

**Re: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
Warning of penalty notice for persistent lateness after the register has closed**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within an agreed Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

(Name) has been marked absent from school for () sessions in the previous () weeks without prior authorisation or an acceptable reason being given to the head teacher. Please note there are normally two sessions in each school day.

This absence has therefore been recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

I need to inform you that the level of (Name's) unauthorised absence places you at risk of a penalty notice and/or court action by the Local Authority.

Providing there are no further unauthorised absences within the next fifteen school days, which will start two days after the date of this letter (to allow for postage) a penalty notice will not be issued on this occasion.

I must also draw your attention to the fact that should (Name) have more unauthorised absences related to lateness within the next twelve months following this warning letter, you may receive a penalty notice without further warning.

Yours sincerely