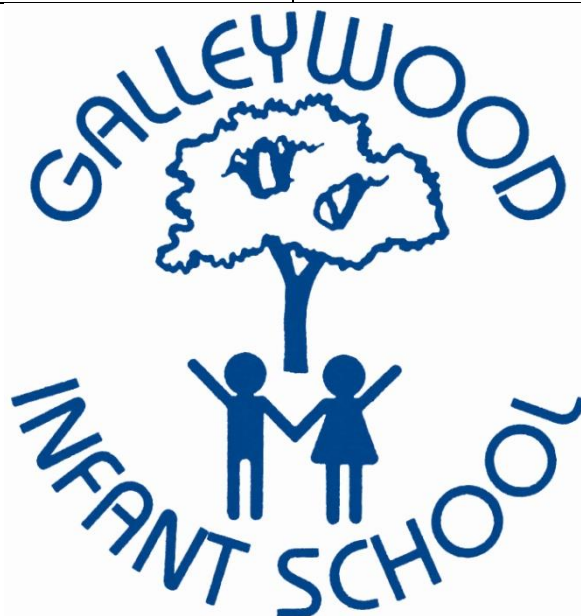


Galleywood Infant School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

In conjunction with St Michael's CE (VA) Junior School

Reviewed by Headteachers at Galleywood Infant School and St Michael's Junior School	January 2019
Ratified by Full Governing Body	March 2019
To be reviewed:	March 2020





Galleywood Infant School and St Michael's CE VA Junior School



Attendance Policy

Updated: January 2019

Galleywood Infant School is committed to providing a full and successful education for every child so that they achieve very well, establish good and lasting relationships with their peers and are well prepared for Key Stage 2. Regular and punctual attendance is crucial and the school works closely with all parents and families to establish the strong home school links and communication systems to underpin these.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate statutory national code.

Leave of Absence is not a legal right and from September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 all references to family holidays have been removed, together with the right for parents to apply for up to 10 days holiday during term time. Schools have the discretion to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance to the headteacher in accordance with school procedures and in writing.

If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in a penalty notice(s) being issued by the Local Authority (Education Welfare Service).

NB. The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher. Where possible, schools will try to have a consistent approach to all leave of absence requests – so that requests for siblings who attend different schools are met with the same response by each Headteacher who receives a request.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Why regular attendance is so important

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
Anti Bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a serious safeguarding matter.

Learning

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

School Procedures

Both schools give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns with attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In June 2015 Ofsted inspectors reported national findings of inconsistent practices for recording and reporting cases where children are removed from schools. This raised serious concerns about safeguarding issues with children potentially exposed to the risk of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, therefore, recommended that the Government strengthen regulations to ensure that schools provide regular and accurate information to their Local Authority about children as they are added to or removed from school admissions registers.

During spring 2016 the DfE consulted on Improving Information in Identifying Children Missing Education, which set out to improve communication and coordination between schools, including independent schools and Local Authorities.

The outcome of the consultation led to amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 being made on 22nd July 2016 which came into effect on 1st September 2016. Under Regulation 12 schools are now legally required to notify their local authority of every new entry to the admission register and every deletion from the school register. Notifications must be received by the Local Authority **within five days**.

To enable schools to fulfil this new statutory duty, an online form has been devised for completion: Statutory Notification of Admission/ Deletion to/from Essex School Roll. The

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 provide the original regulations including regulation 8 which stipulates the ground under which a school may remove a pupil from roll.

The School Day at Galleywood Infant School

8:30 School gates open (children have unsupervised access to the school playground)

8:50 School opens, early morning activities in all classrooms

9:00 School learning starts, registers are taken.

3:10 School finishes and classes are dismissed from classroom doors.

Galleywood Infant School:

- Encourages and promotes good attendance.
- Expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn. Registration takes place at 9.00am and 1.10pm. Pupils arriving after this time are marked as Late (L). If they arrive after the 15 minute registration period will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U) unless an acceptable reason is provided.
- Works in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as soon as possible.
- Reports to parents on individual achievement and attendance at least annually.
- Communicates with parents immediately if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Notification of Absence

Parents are asked to telephone, text or email the school office on the first day of any absence and on each subsequent day by 9am. If no call, text or email is received, the school office will telephone the parent(s) of the absent child, and if necessary other adults for whom we have contact details. If contact cannot be made, 2 members of staff will visit the child's home. If contact still cannot be made, other agencies will be contacted, for example Social Care or Children Missing Education and Employment Service.

When a message is received or contact made a notification of absence slip is completed and passed to the class teacher. These are retained in the school office. Office staff pass daily lists of any absent children considered to be within a vulnerable group, or those who are persistent absentees to the Headteacher to follow up immediately.

Attendance Registers

Both schools keep manual registers which are updated twice a day and an electronic register which is updated daily. Registers are taken at 9am and 1:10pm at GIS and 8:55am and 1:15pm at StM. To ensure registers are accurate and consistent throughout the school, the register is taken by calling out individual names and each child responding. Administration staff log attendance information onto the Pupil Management Information System. The Registers are kept in the School Office during the day and locked in a filing cabinet at night. Registers are kept for a minimum of three years following completion at the end of the academic year.

Registers must be marked accurately in ink as shown below. Where alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both original and changed entry. Correction fluid must not be used.

Present am (red pen) /

Present pm (red pen) \

Absent am/pm (black pen) ○

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absences will be marked by using the relevant code (see Appendix 1) inside the black absence circle. Unauthorised absence will be denoted by Code 'O' (or alternative, see Appendix 1).

Only the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (in his/her absence) (via delegation from the Governing Body) is able to authorise absence, but delegates this responsibility to office staff e.g. doctors' appointments, sickness. This delegation is with the exception of requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.

Authorised Absence

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents have advised school of the absence in writing. (Consideration will be given to alternative procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

- Educational Visit
- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Children who are excluded
- Days set aside exclusively for religious observance
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the Headteacher
- Traveller children who migrate and show every intention of returning
- Music examinations
- Children attending specific off-site tuition e.g. dyslexia
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance
- Exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement)

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing from education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

It may be necessary for the school or Children Missing Education service to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. appointment cards/letters, Medical Certificate, letter from GP.

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons, the school or an Investigation Officer from CME may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

On some occasions, if the school is concerned over the level of attendance, a referral may be made to CME for support for the family in improving their child's attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence may be recorded as unauthorised when it is due to:

- Truancy
- Minding the house
- Slept late
- No uniform
- Looking after brothers and sisters or unwell parents
- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Birthdays
- Unapproved absence

A parent/carer can appeal to the Chair of Governors in writing should they feel their request for absence has been unfairly dealt with. Appeals should be submitted in writing c/o the school office. The Chair of Governors will reply in writing. Only in exceptional circumstances will the leave be authorised.

If absence is not authorised and leave of absence is taken anyway, the case can be referred to MECES who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (£60 if paid within 21 days) to **each parent for each child** taken out of school

Children Leaving School during the Day

Where a parent collects a child during the school day for whatever reason, the child is signed out in the 'Off-Site' book by the parent, giving the reason. When a child returns to school during the day, they should be 'signed in' by the parent, noting the time. Where a child goes home due to illness, the Headteacher is responsible for authorising the absence, but delegates this responsibility to Office Staff. Children who go home to dinner are also 'signed out' and 'signed in' again by their parent.

Punctuality

Punctuality is strongly encouraged and along with absence, persistent lateness can be prosecuted.

Children who arrive late at school must enter school via the main entrance and report to the School Office. If they have been marked absent in the register, they should be signed in, usually by the parent/guardian, in the 'Late book' stating time of arrival in school and the reason for lateness. Lateness after 9.30 a.m. is classed as an absence for the whole session. If the reason can clearly be authorised e.g. doctor's appointment/illness, the Headteacher will authorise the absence. The child will then go to class and the teacher will check that the child has reported to the Office.

Monitoring Attendance

The Admin Officer, under the direction of the Headteacher, monitors attendance and contacts any parents where notification of absence has not been received. If attendance falls below 90%, or if a pattern of intermittent absence appears to be emerging (e.g. Mondays), parents may be contacted by the Headteacher or Learning Mentor and invited to a meeting to discuss ways to improve attendance. Concerns are followed up initially by the school, but if they remain unresolved, the Investigating Officer from Children Missing Education will become involved.

We recognise and value the support and guidance of the Investigating Officer, both in helping families deal with absence and punctuality issues as well as implementing the law with regard to attendance.

Long Term Absences

If a child is absent for a long period of time, for example, due to illness, the class teacher may arrange for work to be sent home. Children returning to school after long periods of absence, are supported and assisted with their reintegration into school.

Promoting attendance/punctuality

Both schools work hard to provide a curriculum which is lively, engaging and meets the needs of all learners.

At GIS, stickers are awarded for those pupils achieving 100% attendance during each term and Certificates for 100% attendance over the academic year. The registration group with

the highest % attendance over a week is awarded the School Attendance trophy for the week.

At SM, children are awarded a certificate and gift for 100% attendance over the academic year.

Pupils with a known attendance problem will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement. If attendance does not improve, parents are invited to a school meeting and our Attendance Officer (**GIS**).

Strategies:

- In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs, the curriculum is regularly reviewed.
- Attendance statistics are collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.
- Expectations are made clear to parents with regards to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and Parent Handbook.
- Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports are used.
- The Attendance and Punctuality policy is available via the school website.
- Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time are re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.
- All issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties are promptly investigated by the School.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Absence Authorisation Codes
- Appendix 2 Leave of Absence Form
- Appendix 3 Standard Letters to Parents

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted to the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

Staff Agreement..... Date.....

Governor Agreement..... Date.....

**Reviewed and updated by HT and Governors at Galleywood Infant School Jan 2019
Ratified by the Full Governing Body in March 2019**

Appendix 1
Absence Authorisation Codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM **
\	Present PM **
L	Late (before registers closed)
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Excluded
C	other authorised circumstances
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)
D	Dual registered (at another establishment)
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience
G	Leave of absence (NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess)
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
N	A reason that has not yet been provided
X	Non-compulsary school age absence
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

**Appendix 2
Leave of Absence Form**



GALLEYWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

This form is for use when a request is made IN ADVANCE for leave of absence during term time. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. (10 days absence means a child will miss 50 hours of education.)

There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however you may apply for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence during term time will **only** be authorised by the Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body if the school believes the exceptional circumstances warrant it (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7). Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. If the higher penalty is unpaid within 28 days, the Education Welfare Service will institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

A child's attendance record is part of the academic record and is passed onto their junior school.

Name of Child (ren): _____

Date of Birth: _____

Class: _____

Dates for which leave of absence is requested:

First day of absence _____ Date of return to school _____

Number of days requested _____

I confirm that a letter is attached outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' which the leave of absence is applied for. I acknowledge that it is entirely the decision of the Headteacher whether or not the reason provided constitutes an exceptional circumstance. I also understand that failure to attach a letter will result in this application not being considered.

Signed _____ (Parent/Carer) Date _____

For school use only:

	Authorised	Unauthorised	Percentage
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Number of sessions absence this academic year to date			
Number of sessions absence last academic year (where applicable)			

Number of authorised days absence: _____

This absence has not been authorised.

Signed: _____ Headteacher Date _____

Noted in register _____

Appendix 3

Standard Letters to Parents

Attendance level is less than 90%

Dear **

It is our practice to monitor attendance termly in all year groups, and more frequently for individual children when it falls below 90%.

We are writing to inform you that ***'s attendance for the ** term was ***% leading to breaks in attendance in ** separate weeks.

I acknowledge that you have informed school of the reasons for the absences, but need to make you aware that, in order to gain the maximum benefit from *his/her* education and make good progress, this attendance level should rise.

If you would like to come and talk to us about this matter, please make an appointment via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Manning
Headteacher

Punctuality

Dear **,

Child's Name: **

I am writing to express concern that ** has arrived late for school on ** occasions since the start of the academic year amounting to * hours and * minutes of missed school. I enclose a copy of the attendance record for your information.

I understand that occasional late arrival at school may be unavoidable. However, when lateness is more frequent the children concerned may become anxious and miss valuable teaching time including guided reading, phonics and English. A child's lateness also causes disruption to the class and I am asking for your co-operation to ensure that he/she attends punctually in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Manning
Headteacher

Unauthorised Leave of Absence

Dear **,

I refer to your application for leave of absence for ** to be absent for * days in the ** Term.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Headteachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request.

I must warn you that, if you do take your child out of school for this time, the absences will not be authorised and the Education Welfare Service may issue a penalty notice to each parent of £60 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Education Welfare Service will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your children attend school regularly.

The matter will also be recorded on your child's school record.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Manning
Headteacher