



## **GERMANDER PARK SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy.**

### **Introduction**

**‘Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school’.**

**School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013**

Germander Park School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure excellent attendance is achieved.

- National target for attendance is 96%
- At Germander Park School, we are continuously working towards our goal of Excellent attendance (97% and over) for all pupils

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (Where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (Where the school will not approve absence)

If a child is absent, parents should call the school on each day of the absence stating a reason. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a child was kept off school for a birthday, then the parents would be informed.

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, then the school would contact the home by telephone on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. This contact needs to be recorded in the register and or attendance log by the School Business Support.

Children with 97% attendance each term will be rewarded by the school with a certificate and wrist band at an assembly at the end of each term culminating in a gold certificate at the end of the summer term for three terms of excellent attendance.

A class attendance certificate is handed out each week in assembly to the class with the highest attendance for the previous week.

### **Overall Aims:**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and

- incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

### **Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:**

#### **The Legal Framework:**

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

#### **Headteacher (HT)**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Milton Keynes Local authority policies and procedure
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Milton Keynes Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Business Support to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

#### **School Business Support- Attendance:**

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To draft and send out letters on the third day of absence if no contact has been made with parents/ carers

- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups and individuals.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for HT//SLT to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality
- To support HT with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

#### **Staff:**

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done at 8.50 am and 1.15 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- **To promptly inform the HT, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.**
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

#### **Parents:**

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. **Children should be kept at home for 48 hours following a bout of sickness/vomiting) or diarrhoea.** If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach ache etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment,

parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

**Therefore, parents are expected to:**

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform □
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence for their child. .
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

**The Local Authority is expected to:**

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

**Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

**Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

**Weekly Celebration Assemblies**

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday. Classes with the highest attendance are recognised.

**School Newsletter**

The school newsletter is regularly used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

**Breakfast Club**

Breakfast Club is 50p every day and is free to pupil premium children. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.00 am, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by two members of staff.

### **The School Learning Environment**

A welcoming and organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners, is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, environmental audits are carried out by the SLT, to ensure this.

### **Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

### **End of Term Attendance Rewards**

At the end of each term there is a special reward for children who have achieved excellent attendance over 97% The HT and the School Business Support organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives

### **Attendance Certificate**

Children with 97%+ attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the HT to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each term, to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

**Only pupils achieving 97% attendance for the whole school year are eligible for the end of year reward.**

### **Sharing attendance data**

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance is shared weekly in assembly

This develops healthy competition between classes to improve attendance. It also engages the teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

### **Parent/teacher consultation evenings**

This provides an opportunity for form teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the HT.

### **Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

#### **Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded manually. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times.

#### **Morning Registers**

- Class registers remain open until 8.50am at this point they are closed and put in the holder for the school office to collect. The teacher may notify the office of any errors in the register until 9.15am when the register will be assumed to be correct.

- At 8.50 the school gates close and children arriving after this time must enter school by the school office where the children need to be signed in with the date, name, time and reason for lateness. These children are recorded as Late before the register closes
- Children arriving after 9.30 are recorded as (L) Late after the register closes
- School Business Support then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked 'P' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs
- From 9.15 School Business Support begins first day absence calls

### **Afternoon Register**

- Registers must be called and marked by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons begin.
- If anyone is not accounted for then they should notify the school office immediately but no later than 1:20pm

### **Absence Log:**

The HT monitors the attendance log weekly to ensure that the attendance log processes are followed and the School Business Support notifies the HT earlier if they are concerned

### **IMPORTANT:**

**Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.**

### **Monitoring First Day Absence:**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Day Absence:**

- Call to first named contact parent/ carer
- If no response call again after 1 hour to one or both named parent/ carers
- In pupil Absence Log if no response note details of contact numbers used and comments- i.e. Was unable to contact parents/carers. If you have been given a valid reason for absence record this on register

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Day Absence:**

- If no response from parent/carers call all named contacts
- Inform Class teacher and HT if a vulnerable child as there is a need to act early
- In pupil Log note details of contact numbers used plus comments

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Absence:**

- Teachers/ HT in pairs to visit local address to ascertain reason why pupil has not attended
- Note reasons if obtained or action taken in Pupil Absence Log
- Letter sent to family home enquiring about absence

### **5th Day of Absence:**

- Notify, Senior Attendance Officer at Milton Keynes Council by phone or email 01908 254596 or [colin.mayo@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:colin.mayo@milton-keynes.gov.uk)
- Notify the Projects Policy and Performance officer at Milton Keynes Council by phone or email- 01908 254039 or [cathy.shaw2@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.shaw2@milton-keynes.gov.uk)
- In Pupil log note details of action taken

#### **From 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Absence:**

- Keep phoning daily known contacts

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Day of school Absence**

- Notify Colin Mayo and Cathy Shaw
- Take Child off School register
- In pupil Log note details of action taken

#### **Attendance Meetings**

The HT monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. If patterns and trends in absence/punctuality are identified, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 90% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

#### **Holidays in term time**

Permission from the HT should be sought, if you want to take your child out of school during term time. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children. Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The HT will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

You can **only** do this if:

- You make an application to the HT in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- There are **exceptional** circumstances

For example:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Funeral/ wedding of a family member

- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

It's up to the HT how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

**You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.**

### **Penalty Notices**

**If a child is taken out of school without the Headteacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.**

#### **Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:**

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

#### **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:**

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that: penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child. Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**