



## Attendance Policy

### 1. Rationale

Regular attendance and excellent punctuality are the foundations for academic achievement and personal development. They establish a responsible attitude towards the opportunities available at school and underpin the basis for the world of work. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety. Regular attendance demonstrates a commitment to learning and the school community please ensure that you and your child/children support our school rules about attendance

### 2. Guiding Principles

We are committed to ensuring that all students benefit from the opportunities available at Hambrook School. Our expectation is that all students arrive on time and attend regularly that is - every day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so. We explain about different types of absence in this policy and we will actively promote this ethos throughout the school community and encourage our students to achieve this. Where this expectation is not met, we will identify and address the barriers that prevent this. (See *Appendix A-Procedures for following up absence concerns*)

### 3. Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually and that they receive an education suitable for their aptitude and ability.

The school have a legal responsibility for maintaining school registers and taking the register twice a day. The school also has a responsibility for reporting absence to the Local Authority (LA). We also have safeguarding responsibility and duty of care to all our students.

Student responsibilities – we encourage our students to become independent young people including taking responsibility for their attendance and punctuality **when this is age appropriate**.

### 4. Attendance

- We expect our students to attend school **on time** every day for the whole day that the school is open unless there is an unavoidable reason for not doing so e.g. illness.
- We will celebrate and reward students who achieve our expectations of a high level of attendance and those who have shown sustained improvement.



- We will share attendance information with parents/carers and students focusing on the link between attendance and achievement at each parents' evening and in each child's end of year report.
- We will promote high attendance and punctuality through assemblies, class discussion; reinforcing the link between attendance and achievement.
- The school will communicate attendance matters to parents/carers via text; telephone; email; letter and through the school website. Discussion about attendance will also take place at each parents' evening.

## **5. Registration**

There are two sessions in each school day, the morning session and the afternoon session. Registers are taken at the following times:

- *8.50am morning registration*
- *3.10pm afternoon registration*

Children are expected to be in school for the whole of each day. Children taken out of school early at the end of the school day will miss their attendance mark for the whole of the afternoon session, if there is no valid reason (see below section 6 for absence reasons) the registration mark will be U (unauthorised).

## **6. Absence from school**

There are only two categories of absence from school:

- Authorised – approved
- Unauthorised – not approved

Only the Head can approve absence from school. That is the law.

Absence will be recorded using the code recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance. (See *Appendix B* for link to *School Attendance Guidance*)

Requests for absence in term time must be submitted in writing (or e-mail) at least two weeks in advance to the Headteacher who will treat every request on an individual basis and respond accordingly. The rules about what type of absence is acceptable is set out below

**Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved: -**



- Leave of absence - for bereavement, funeral, wedding
- Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non- urgent routine check-up appointments should be made for after school hours or during the school holidays.) Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.
- Illness (doctors notes may be requested from the Headteacher)
- Religious observance - one day to participate in an organised religious event
- If a student is excluded from school for a behaviour related incident, this is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of absence that will not be approved**

- Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members, attending medical appointments of siblings.
- Holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Headteacher – in line with changes to the law implemented in 2013.
- Late arrival to school after the register has closed has to be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there is an exceptional reason.

### **Unauthorised absence can lead to parents /carers being fined by the Local Authority (LA)**

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity is acted upon swiftly to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the school of the reason for absence and the expected date of return to school.

### **Safeguarding**

All unexplained absence from school will be followed up each day by the school contacting parents/carers. If no response is obtained, contact will be made with people listed as emergency contact numbers to ascertain a student's whereabouts and safety. Parents/Carers are required to provide the school with three emergency contact numbers. Where no response is received a referral may be made to the Access and Response Team (ART), the Police or the school's Education Welfare Officer.

### **Removal from Roll**

There are strict grounds as to when a school may remove a student from the admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the school must notify the Local Authority See Appendix B - link to South Glos Children Missing education procedures

## **7. How our policy works in practice**



## Punctuality

- Students who arrive late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes). Registration takes place at 8.50am. **Students should be in school for the start of Registration at 8.50am.**
- Frequent late arrival will be challenged by the school and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher/Education Welfare Officer/or delegate.
- **If a student arrives after the register has closed at 9.00am they will be recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival.)** Unauthorised sessions can result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the LA.

## Medical appointments

- We monitor the amount of time missed due to medical appointments carefully.
- We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and on-going dental treatment may require a student having time out of school. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from parents where a whole day is missed for this reason.
- Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided for the school. This can be in the form of appt card/text message or prescription note.
- Routine, non-urgent appointments must be made after school time and during the 12-week school holiday.

## Illness

- Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We have a duty to support students in these circumstances to ensure they do not miss out on education.
- When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Head teacher/Education Welfare Officer /or delegate to consider whether an individual health care plan is appropriate – (*See Appendix B -South Glos Medical needs Policy*)

## Holiday absence in term time

- If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time; they must put the request in writing to the Headteacher at least two weeks in advance of the absence.
- Each case will be considered on an individual basis and the decision communicated to the parents. Only the Headteacher can agree to absence in term time.
- Where an unauthorised holiday is taken for 10 sessions (5 days) or more the school will pass this information onto the Local Authority, who may fine parents/carers. Please see *Appendix C* for more information on penalty notices.



## 8. Penalty Notices from the Local Authority

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in 7 school weeks (ie 70 sessions). There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon: 1. where unauthorised absences are recorded 2. where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and; a) the parent has not informed the school; or b) the leave was not authorised; or c) the child did not return on the agreed date 3. where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed 4. where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded. Please see *Appendix C* for more information on penalty notices.

**Policy Date:** January 2020

**Review Date:** January 2022

### EIA Screening

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups?	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		
Gender reassignment		
Marriage and civil partnership		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Racial groups (language, culture, ethnicity)		
Religion or belief (worship, religious or cultural observance, incl non-belief)		
Sex (male, female)		
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		

Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment



## **Appendix A**

Concerns about absence from school and the likely impact on a students' progress will be communicated to both students and parents through our attendance procedures: -

- Unexplained absence from school will be followed up daily – (see Safeguarding).
- Where an explanation for absence is not specific ie 'unwell' we will seek to ascertain a definitive reason, so we can record absence precisely using the correct code.
- Attendance of all students will be monitored at least termly and for individual students with low attendance more regularly, and patterns of Broken Weeks /Incomplete weeks and low levels of attendance will be investigated.

For a full explanation, please see below:

<b>Stage 1</b>	Year to date broken weeks greater than 5%	Letter 1 Offering support
<b>Stage 2</b>	Two terms or more > 5% broken weeks	Letter 2 More challenging letter, offering support put pointing out a need for change
<b>Stage 3</b>	Continued broken weeks > 5%	Meeting with Headteacher and/or EWO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss impact of missed learning</li> <li>• investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• set attendance targets</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4</b>	Previous year attendance <95% Repeated termly attendance > 5% broken weeks	Meeting with Headteacher and/or EWO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss impact of missed learning</li> <li>• investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• set attendance targets</li> <li>• fining or Individual Health Care Plan creation discussed</li> <li>• Set review period</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 5</b>	Previous year attendance < 95% 5 or more broken weeks (over two terms) Repeated termly attendance continues to be of concern and School Attendance Meetings have not brought about improvement	Following School Attendance Meeting review, meeting held with Head Teacher and/or EWO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise parent/carer that a panel meeting will take place.</li> <li>• School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange)</li> <li>• If no improvement after 4 weeks, school completes a request for an Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative.</li> </ul>



## **Appendix B**

### **Formal guidance informing this policy**

- ❖ Education Act 1996 which states if any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.
- ❖ The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 amended DFE April 2013
- ❖ Parental responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines) DFE January 2017
- ❖ Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE July 2018
- ❖ Keeping children safe in education. DFE Sept 2018
- ❖ Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE May 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- ❖ Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – DFE August 2017
- ❖ Children missing education -- DFE September 2016
- ❖ School Attendance Guidance – DFE Sept 2018
- ❖ South Glos Council local code of conduct with regards to issuing of Education Penalty Notices
- ❖ [www.southglos.gov.uk- medical needs policy -December 2016](http://www.southglos.gov.uk- medical needs policy -December 2016)



**Appendix C**

# Penalty Notices - information for parents and carers

South Gloucestershire Council



## What is a Penalty Notice?

Penalty Notices were introduced under Section 23 (1) of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 to address unauthorised absence from school. It is a fine issued by South Gloucestershire Council to parents/carers of a child who has failed to attend school regularly and whose absence is unauthorised.

It does not require the parent to attend court but is an alternative to prosecution in the magistrate's court. Parents/carers who pay the fine in full within the time limits cannot later be prosecuted for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

## Why have Penalty Notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority of the government and local authority because missing school may limit a pupil's attainment, disrupt school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

## When might a Penalty Notice be issued?

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in 7 school weeks (ie 70 sessions). There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon:

1. where unauthorised absences are recorded
2. where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
  - a) the parent has not informed the school; or
  - b) the leave was not authorised; or
  - c) the child did not return on the agreed date
3. where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed
4. where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

## How much is the fine?

The fine is £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

For example a two - parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 between 21 and 28 days.

The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

## What can you do to avoid receiving a Penalty Notice?



- ensure your child attends school every day and on time
- make sure your child knows that they cannot have odd days off school - 'Every Lesson Counts'
- speak to the class teacher or tutor if your child is beginning to miss odd days ☹ don't take family holidays in term time.

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## Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal against the Penalty Notice but if you believe it to be incorrectly issued to you, you should contact the Senior Education Officer immediately (number below). If you believe you are not guilty of the offence and therefore decide not to pay the Notice, you have the right to represent your case at the Magistrates Court but you should seek legal advice before making this decision.

## What happens if I do not pay?

If you have not paid the Penalty Notice in full **before the 28 days** allowed, the authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If proven, this could result in a fine of up to £1000 under Section 444 (1) or up to £2500 and/or three months imprisonment under Section 444 (1A), a Parenting Order or other sanctions at the Magistrates' disposal. You are strongly urged to seek legal advice if you are considering not paying the Penalty Notice.

## Further information and advice

Department for Education - School attendance: Statutory guidance and advice:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance>

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com) 0808 802 0008 [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

08444 111 444 [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

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