

Attendance Policy

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of Glebelands School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor/class teacher or Head of Achievement, any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons that have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all students, at least twice daily
- Monitor every student's attendance
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a student fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any student's concerns.
- Ensure voice mail messages for student absence and Truancy Call warning are processed promptly each day.
- Any unknown absence marks shall be raised with the parents by phone or letter.
- Scrutinise any notes and messages carefully. If the authenticity is dubious, relay this to the Head of Achievement.
- Categorise absence correctly.
- Inform the Head of Achievement should the reason provided for absence be unsatisfactory or require further investigation or discussion; unexplained or extended absence; a pattern of absence is observed or another student follows the same pattern or where punctuality is causing a problem.

- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of students who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the EA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer
- Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.
- Record absences as either authorised or unauthorised. Where the expectation of an absence is deemed as unsatisfactory the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Encouraging Attendance

Glebelands School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a student's or parent's concerns about the school or other students
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- By requiring students to regularly record their own attendance and punctuality
- By celebrating good and improved attendance
- By monitoring students, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Officer if the irregular attendance continues.

Parent Responsibility and The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

Registration & Lateness

The school day begins at 8:45am. Morning registration will take place at 8:45am. The registers will remain open until 9.30am. Any student who arrives within this period will be marked present. However if the teachers register has been done, they will be marked as present but late. Any student arriving after this time should sign in at reception and will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation e.g. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered. (see Appendix 2)

The afternoon registration will be taken between 12:35pm – 12:55pm for Year 7 & 8 students and 1:15pm-1:35pm for Year 9-11 students.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the 10 minute registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Escalation Process

If a student is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. However if no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

First Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

Second Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. A message will be left where no contact can be made.

Third Day Absence

The school will telephone the parent to request reason for absence. School will note any reason given for absence and will categorise it as authorised or unauthorised. If no response is received the school will send a letter and the students Head of Achievement will be informed.

Ten Days Absence

Any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to Education Welfare. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Education Welfare meets with Heads of Achievement regularly to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Phone call to parent by Head of Achievement (HOA) and issues discussed with student within school.
2. Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
3. Meeting at school with HOA.

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to Education Welfare Officer.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Education Welfare, acting on behalf of the Local Authority, may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Children should not be taken out of school for holidays during term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/guardians/ carers are expected to book their family holidays

during the school holidays. No parent/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

If a leave of absence in term time is unavoidable, an application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances form must be completed prior to the absence. This can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise the absences.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorization the case will be referred to Education Welfare and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

Students identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

The Education Welfare Officer

Education Welfare monitors the attendance of children. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to Education Welfare. The EWO will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the EWO can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Glebelands School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from Glebelands School roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if known.

The student's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education welfare.

Rewards

Certificates will be awarded for 100% attendance.

Student's attendance will be celebrated in regular assemblies and at Celebration Evening.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping a register of attendance for each lesson and raise attendance concerns with their Head of Department.

Form tutors:

- Provide pastoral support to address attendance issues.

Heads of Achievement:

- Regularly meet with Education Welfare to identify and action any attendance concerns.
- Work with families to resolve attendance issues.

Attendance Officer:

- Will ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date during periods 1 and 5.
- Contacts parents and requests reasons for absence.
- Collates daily attendance records and, together with the attendance lead, puts in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Lead (Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher):

- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis.
- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the attendance office and Education Welfare to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place.
- Identifies and monitors attendance of PA students.

Headteacher:

- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the school attendance lead will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are:

ABSENCE TARGETS 2013/2014	
Whole School : 5.6	Persistent Absence: 5.6

Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark. Registration will be taken by subject teachers during period 1 (am registration) and period 5 (pm registration).

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances