

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

REVISED NOVEMBER 2022



## INTRODUCTION

Gotham Primary is committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality to enable children to access their full curriculum entitlement. We promote equal opportunities for all and will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals, and this policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **PARENTS** Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- **ATTENDANCE OFFICER** - Nadia Delfino will monitor SIMS daily, enter minutes late and supply regular reports to the Head Teacher showing data for the whole school and sub-groups.
- **HEAD TEACHER** – Janette Allen will look for patterns of lateness and absence respond to concerns and report back to the Governing Body.
- **SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER** – Rachel Hughes will manage admissions into school and ensure the SIMS registers are up to date.
- **TEACHERS** – will complete the register twice daily on SIMS

## ATTENDANCE DOCUMENTS

1. Loss of Learning Form (AB1) – A written application form requesting permission from the Head Teacher to take a child out of school during term time (*supporting documents eg. appointment cards, medical letters will be requested to be seen*).
2. Pupil Absence Parental Confirmation Form (AB2) – In circumstances, when reason for absence has not been given through Parentmail, email or phone, parents will be asked to verify the reason of any unexplained absence. Form will be sent home for completion.
3. Pupil Attendance Review AB3 – Sample monitoring letters for pupils who have fallen below 94% 'cause for concern' and pupils below 90% to meet and discuss Early Help referrals and unauthorised leave without written medical evidence. These letters will be personalised.
4. Leave of Absence Authorised (AB4) – Letter from Head Teacher granting authorised leave of absence.
5. Leave of Absence Unauthorised – Penalty Notice Warning (AB5) – Letter declining leave of absence.
6. Penalty Notice Referral (AB6) – Letter advising the Local Education Authority to issue a Penalty Notice Fine to parent(s).
7. Lateness Review (AB7) – Letter from Head Teacher inviting parent(s) to a meeting to discuss punctuality.
8. Unauthorised Lateness Penalty Notice notification (AB8) – Letter explaining that a request for a Fixed Penalty Notice is going to be sent to the Local Authority.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES – RECORDING ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS

- The school day start time is 8.55am, pupils are expected to arrive at this time.
- The school day end time is 3.30pm.
- Registers are recorded on SIMs twice a day.
- Morning registers should all be completed by 9.00am, pupils arriving between 9.00am and 9.25am will be marked as late (L) in the register.
- After 9.25am, pupils arrival will be unauthorised (U) unless an acceptable reason/evidence is provided.
- **If children receive more than 10 U code sessions in 6 rolling consecutive weeks, they will be referred for a penalty notice.**
- Afternoon registers are completed by 1.05pm, children arriving in school after 1.05 will be recorded as late (L) in the register.
- After 1.15pm, pupils arrival will be unauthorised (U) unless an acceptable reason/evidence is provided.
- If children leave school prior to 3.00pm, the appropriate absence code will be marked in the register. An acceptable reason/evidence will be required. If this is not provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (O).

Any pupils arriving late need to report to reception and should be accompanied by a parent so that a reason for lateness can be given; the number of minutes late will also be recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

Absences should be reported to school via Parentmail, telephone call or email to [ndelfino@gotham.notts.sch.uk](mailto:ndelfino@gotham.notts.sch.uk) or [office@gotham.notts.sch.uk](mailto:office@gotham.notts.sch.uk)

If we are unaware of a reason for absence by the end of morning registration, the office team will contact families through Parentmail to obtain the reason for their child's absence. If there is no response, we will contact by email then phone. Where no contact can be made the Local Authority Child Missing from Education guidance will be followed.

All pupils have their attendance recorded on SIMS as being authorised or unauthorised. The SIMS code will also show the reason for any other absence, such as illness, medical.

If the absence is not for an acceptable reason, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

For any pupil taken out of school for routine medical appointments during the school day, you will need to report to the school office and sign out using the VPass system. Supporting documents need to be provided.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE (INC HOLIDAYS) DURING TERM TIME

For pre-planned leave of absence, including holidays, a written application for permission from the Head Teacher must be made at least two weeks prior to the absence. On occasions this won't be possible, e.g. for a funeral. This is done on the Loss of Learning form (Form AB1) Supporting documents to be provided, where appropriate.

**Gotham Primary School does not authorise absences (inc holidays) during term time, unless there is an exceptional circumstance.**

The Head Teacher will decide when circumstances are 'exceptional'. Written confirmation from the Head Teacher will be sent to the parent confirming if the child's leave will be authorised or unauthorised. Letters – AB4 (authorised) AB5 (unauthorised).

If your application is refused and you still take your child out of school, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. If you forget to inform the school of any absence (inc holiday) this will also be recorded as unauthorised.

**Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice Fee or even being prosecuted in court.**

If an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, his/her parent/carer (s) are guilty of an offence. Please also note that if you have more than one child, each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter. The Local Authority may take formal action against you for failure to comply with the law. Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution, but may not be issued if prosecution is a more appropriate response to the attendance issues.

Therefore, your child's irregular attendance could result in one of the following actions:

- a. A Penalty Notice being issued. Each penalty notice is £60 if paid within the first 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22-28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution
- b. Prosecution. This could lead to fines of up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment

The Supreme Court in April 2017 clarified the definition of regular attendance to be 'attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

Therefore, if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

**All letters regarding attendance irregularities will be sent to the legal parents of the child, irrespective of whether they are married or not, living together or not, or if they have contact with the child and/or parental responsibility.**

If children receive more than 10 U code sessions in 6 rolling consecutive weeks, the above procedure for irregular attendance will be followed.

Please note you may receive more than one penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued per child per parent by the Local Education Authority.

Nottinghamshire County Council will not issue more than two penalty notices per child in any 12-month period. Where further absences occur, or where Nottinghamshire County Council deems it appropriate enforcement action may proceed directly to prosecution

### **FREQUENT AND PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

In cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 94% or begins to develop a pattern of persistent absence below 90%, the school will contact the parent(s) in writing to discuss how improvements can be made. A referral for support may be made. Written medical evidence\* will be requested in some circumstances. In these cases, absences will not be authorised without medical evidence being provided. (Letters AB3)

*\*written evidence needs to be an appointment card, text or email from a medical practitioner or a copy of a prescription*

Regular monitoring of your child's attendance will take place and if insufficient improvements in attendance are made, further action will be taken and even result in a Penalty Notice Fee and/or prosecution.

### **LEGAL ACTION TO ENFORCE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The Local Education Authority can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. If attendance remains a serious concern the school will consult with Nottinghamshire County Council and may consider issuing one of the following;-

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a Fine (sometimes known as a 'Penalty Notice')

## **REGISTERS**

By law Registers must be kept until children transfer to secondary school.

## **ABSENCE NOTES**

Letters and Forms received from parents in relation to any attendance matters will be scanned and records kept within personal files. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the records may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **GDPR**

Gotham Primary School fully complies with information legislation. For the full details on how we use your personal information please contact the school office - 0115 9149751 or [office@gotham.notts.sch.uk](mailto:office@gotham.notts.sch.uk).

## **CLARIFICATION OF ACCEPTABLE ABSENCES**

<b>EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR ABSENCE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holidays during term time.</li><li>• Looking after others at home.</li><li>• Minding the house.</li><li>• Visiting relatives.</li><li>• Taking long weekends.</li><li>• Shopping trips.</li><li>• Birthday treats.</li><li>• Oversleeping.</li><li>• Clothing in the wash.</li><li>• Routine dental appointments.</li><li>• Visiting the hairdressers.</li><li>• Non-attendance due to repeated lack of transport.</li></ul>