



St Giles Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'You must love one another as I have loved you.' John 13 v 34.

Working together with love we will provide a happy and nurturing environment where all will, ***'learn to love and love to learn'***, making outstanding progress through an enriched and creative curriculum. Through our strong Christian ethos we will celebrate and embrace the richness of our community.

Learn to Love - Love to Learn

'You must love one another as I have loved you.' John 13 v 34

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Introduction

At St Giles, attendance and punctuality are a very high priority. We want motivated enthusiastic learners who get to school on time, ready to learn and who thus establish good habits for lifelong learning. Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to make sure that children come to school regularly and on time. The school has a legal duty to mark the register and record the attendance of every child on its roll and to specifically code which children are absent or late and why. There is now a statutory requirement that schools publish statistics about their attendance rates. We fully support all initiatives from our Local Authority and comply with all of Walsall Children's Services guidance and expectations. We have challenging targets set each year against both local and national averages. Absences fall into two groups, authorised and unauthorised.

What are authorised absences?

Authorised absences involve children having time out of school for approved reasons, for example: illness, urgent medical appointments, attendance at funerals, religious observance or visits to new schools. The school will need an explanation from parents or guardians (a note, telephone call or message in person) if they are to authorise the child's absence. This is then coded in the register. Every effort should be made to arrange routine dentists and GP appointments outside school hours. However, it is understood that specialist hospital or clinic appointments may have to be made during school hours. It is essential that the Office is informed before a parent collects a child in order for relevant preparations to be made and to keep disruption to classroom practice to a minimum.

Exceptional authorised leave

Parents who wish to take their children out of school for any other reason during school time are asked to make this request to the Headteacher, in writing or in person. It is important to make the request in good time before the period of requested leave; it is not acceptable to tell the school afterwards. The Headteacher/School Attendance Lead will respond quickly by phone, letter, E-mail or in person.

Each request for exceptional leave will be considered as a separate case and the Headteacher's decision will take into account the following, as contained in the DFE Circular:

- The reason for the leave and why it could not be taken in school holidays;
- The number of days requested;
- Previous requests for leave during term-time;
- The child's attendance and punctuality record (broadly speaking we would expect a pattern of attendance consistently around 95% for the current and previous year) ;
- The age of the child;
- The child's stage of education, any additional needs they may have, their current attainment and level of progress and any impact the leave will have on their learning.

There is no entitlement to holiday in term-time, and holidays in term time will not be authorised by the school. Unauthorised absence may lead to a penalty notice being served and the local Authority issue these and the penalty notices are issued per parent per child.

Requests to attend sporting events within the UK or abroad must be agreed with both the school and the Local Authority, using Code P: participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved.

We strongly discourage missing school. Children miss out on crucial work and friendships and may lose their sense of engagement and involvement with school life.

Requests to the Headteacher need to be made before any planned absence is taken.

What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences involve children having time out of school without explanation, or where the reason for absence is one that the school cannot authorise, for example: holidays, shopping, birthdays, baby-sitting for younger children, too tired, late night due to birthday, not realising term had started or because other members of the family are ill. If the Headteacher does not authorise exceptional leave in term time, and the child is still taken, this is always classified as an unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absences may lead to penalty notices being issued.

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. They can only be issued by a head teacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head authorised by the head teacher), a local authority officer or the police. All schools and the police must send copies of penalties issued to the local authority. Penalties can only be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Routines for managing and improving attendance

- A member of the senior staff, Mr Dow (Safeguarding and Attendance Lead) and our Family Support Manager (Mrs Lindsey Leonowicz) are at the school entrance every morning from 8-30am when the school gate is opened. Registration is at 8.45am.
 - Termly 100% attendance certificates and prizes are awarded.
 - A clear and consistent message is given at all times by all members of staff;
 - Late marks are issued after 9.00am. There is a great emphasis on consistency between classes.
- Every morning by 9.30am checks on all class registers are made and parents are telephoned if absences remain unexplained. Our approach is to be direct and relatively informal and to follow up as soon as possible. Home visits will take place to follow up cases where contact cannot be made. (School/LA)
- Where possible parents are to try and book routine medical and dental appointments after school hours but where appointments are given during school hours parents are asked to either ensure the child comes to school as normal before the appointment time or attend the school on route to the appointment before 0900am to ensure the child receives their attendance mark for the morning. On completion of the appointment children are expected to return to school unless this is physically impossible.

Punctuality

Punctuality is very important and sets important lifelong habits. At St Giles Primary the School Gates open at 8.30am with all children entering their classrooms directly. All children should be in school by 8.45am, at which time the main gate is locked. After this time all pupils who arrive at school are recorded as late by the School Office.

We are committed to reducing the number of persistent absences in school, and are committed to identifying and supporting pupils and families to ensure their attendance is above 90%. The persistent absence category is where pupils have attendance levels at 90% and lower and when inspected by OFSTED, OFSTED will look at all of these pupils and seek to see what Schools have done to improve those pupil's attendance.

Children can access their class from 8.30am and are expected to be in school by 8.40am in order to be registered in class by 8.45am.

Attendance Issues and Procedures:

Stage One:

- Contact with parents or carers when a problem is first identified, and to deal swiftly with any issues arising. If school have been unable to contact a parent by telephone a text message will be sent to the designated contact 1st contact requesting an explanation of the absence, with an indication of when the child is expected to return. (First Day Contact by 9.30am will be made for all children absent without notification, followed up by home visits by the school or LA)

Stage Two:

- If there is no improvement following the initial contact and when there is no satisfactory explanation for absences then contact will be made with parents by the school or the EWO. This is to explain to the parents or carers that future absences may not be authorised and as a result the matter may ultimately be referred to the EWS. Meetings to be held with the school and EWO to discuss absences and absence requests.

Stage Three:

- When there is still no improvement after stage one and two then the parents should be invited to attend a formal meeting at school where attendance and punctuality targets may be set. (The Education Welfare Officer will also be invited to attend)

Medical evidence to be produced where cumulative absences are less than 93%.

The school is unable to authorise absences where cumulative absences are less than 90% unless there is a recognised underlying health condition.

The school will automatically request medical evidence where the child's attendance is at 93% or lower or where the attendance level is higher than this but there has been an absence where the child is absent for more than two days. When your child is absent from school you must inform the school without delay. This can be done in a number of ways;

- 1) Contact before the school opens by leaving an answer phone message on the School Answer Machine – 01902 368308
- 2) Contact before school opens through E-mail via the school e-mail address postbox@stgiles.walsall.sch.uk.
- 3) Contacting the school office between 8.30am and 9.15am- 01902 368308
- 4) Out of hours text: (Schoolgateway) 01902504098

If for any reason you are unable to call we will always make contact with the first contact listed on your child's details to find out the reason for the absence and when you estimate your child will be back at school. If your child is off school with illness and you have been requested to provide medical evidence by school staff, please supply this to the office as soon as possible after your child's return to school to allow the school to 'authorise' the absence which will then in turn prevent the Local Authority from raising Penalty Notices for the absence. The Penalty Notices are £60 per parent per child so it is important that we get this right to avoid unnecessary Penalty Notices being issued. The school has a stock of Medical Evidence slips that can be taken to a Doctor, Chemist or Pharmacy First for them to stamp or sign which can then be produced to the school office to allow staff to update the attendance records. If there are any queries in relation to attendance matters then please contact Mr Dow, the School Designated Safeguarding Lead, via the school office to arrange a appointment at a mutually convenient time.

In addition to this, the Education Welfare Officer may make contact with the parents to fully explore the reasons non-attendance, with a view to removing any obstacles.

Ultimately, if there is a lack of co-operation by the parents and the child fails to maintain regular attendance at school, the Education Welfare Service may take legal action.

Date Reviewed: 5th June 2025
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[Article 28 \(right to education\)](#)

[Article 29 \(goals of education\)](#)

