

St White's Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy - Pupils

Date of Review: October 2019

Date of Next Review: October 2021

Signed, Chair of Governors:

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Summary of Changes:

1. Introduction – St White's School Attendance and Punctuality Policy - Pupils

Introduction
The school's vision is to be a beacon of excellence, delivering such a high level of education that we are sought out in the area. For our pupils to leave this school, not only secondary ready, but life-ready, we believe that it is vital that pupils attend school regularly so that they are able to reap the full benefits from their education and achieve their potential.

Regular Attendance
The level of attendance that St White's school aims to achieve is 100% and no unauthorised absences. The Education Act 1944 and the Education Act 1996 require pupils to attend school regularly. St White's Primary School defines regular attendance as an expectation that pupils attend every session available to them, unless the reason for absence is one that meets the school's criteria for authorising absences. The only exceptions are for authorised reasons such as sickness absence.

This policy will make reference to:

- *The DfE's statutory School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities September 2019*
- *School attendance parental responsibility measures January 2015*
- *Managing School Absence a Guide for school professionals GCC September 2017*
- *Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police January 2015*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018*
- *Working together to Safeguard Pupils July 2018*
- *GCC Primary School Attendance Ladder of Intervention January 2016*
- *Home Education Information for Parents in Gloucestershire September 2015*
- *LA Guidance Schools: Supporting Children with Medical Needs March 2017*
- *DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017*

2. Aims of The Policy

2.1 To support the attendance policy, the school will:

- Treat attendance as a priority.
- Provide a safe, happy and stimulating environment for all pupils so that they feel valued and welcomed and know that their presence in school is important.
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity, including at parent/carer consultation evenings and other meetings, at staff induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards and on the website.
- Always ensure that there is telephone contact on the first day of absence.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Set attendance targets for the school (and for each year group if necessary).
- Keep parents/carers regularly informed of their child's attendance levels.

- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis. Analyse data and respond by targeting support for families and using county and National policies to ensure the school and parents adhere to their responsibilities.
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels and what the school is doing to improve them.

2.2 Outcomes

- The school is meeting or exceeding attendance targets set within the SDP.
- The school's attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local and National comparator schools and is striving to continue to improve.
- The school has positive feedback from the school community as well as outside agencies such as Ofsted and the local authority regarding attendance.

2.3 Responsibilities

2.3.1 Parents/carers will:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, is appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Bring their child to the reception desk to sign in, if they are late after registration closes at 8.50.
- Let the school know, by telephoning or using the school website before 9.00 a.m, on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that early help and support can be offered.
- Collect their child promptly from school at 3:15pm or adhere to the designated time of collection for after school clubs or wrap around care.
- Inform the school office, as soon as possible, if they are going to be late collecting a child for any reason, and agree to any relevant wrap around care and fees if required.
- Inform the school of arrangements that they make in relation to:
    - Designated people who have responsibility for collecting children at the end of the day, whether that is at 3:15pm or after a club and/or wrap around care;
    - Permission that they give for their children to walk home independently (year 5 and 6 children) either at the end of the school day, or after clubs and/or wrap around care.
- Adhere to the designated times for dropping off or collecting pupils from clubs and/or wrap around care.
- Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not medical in writing.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

2.3.2 School will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a high priority.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of pupils.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Ensure that all staff understand the importance of good attendance by pupils and use this information when reporting or discussing their progress with parents.
- Ensure that all staff are clear about what to do if a pupil is absent from school, including when to report a child missing in education (CME).
- Ensure that parents provide information in relation to:
    - Designated adults who have permission to collect the children;
    - Permission that they give for their children to walk home independently (year 5 and 6 pupils) either at the end of the school day, or after clubs and/or wrap around care.
- Ensure that staff challenge if an adult other than designated adults arrive to collect children and do not allow them to take children until confirmation is ascertained from the parent and their permission given.
- Challenge children if the arrangements in respect of collection, or walking home alone, are different to the records that the school holds.
- Contact Social Care if a parent is more than 45 minutes late to collect their child and the school has been unable to contact them. If the school has concern about a vulnerable parent the police will also be contacted.
- Contact Social Care in the event that a child is collected persistently (more than 5 occasions) late from school through a MARF as this constitutes neglect.
- In the event that a child is persistently collected late (more than 5 occasions), and there is no intervention from outside agencies to support the school with this, the parent will be charged for the time that the school has to provide supervision for that child beyond the school day.
- Follow the key principles and guidance set out in the GCC Primary School Absence Ladder of Intervention
- Notify parents/carers, regularly of their child's attendance levels.
- Notify the Local Authority (Education Inclusion Service) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

2.4 The Headteacher will:

- Ensure that registers are kept for both sessions of the school day, that the coding and recording is accurate (Statutory)
- Communicate with the LA to report:
    - Deletions from the register (Statutory)
    - 10+ days continuous unauthorised absence (Statutory)
    - Pupils on part-time timetables
- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a high priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to staff, pupils and their parents/carers.
- Oversee attendance procedures.

- Be the lead professional and hold regular attendance meetings with the designated attendance committee.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents regularly, of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data and report regularly on attendance information to the governing body and other stakeholders and what the school is doing to continually improve the school's attendance rates.
- Challenge poor attendance and use guidance and support from a range of agencies to hold parents to account in relation to their child's attendance.

2.5 Governors will:

- Hold the Headteacher to account and monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly for their effectiveness and impact.

3. Registration

3.1 The school has a responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of the school hours:

- The school gates open at 8.30am, classroom doors open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. Children arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late (L). Children arriving after 9am will be recorded as unauthorised absence (U). School finishes at 3.15pm.

3.2 The school has a duty of care to ensure all children are safe during school hours. Therefore, school must:

- Keep up to date attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll.
- Ensure that the class teacher calls the register twice a day so that every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site in accordance with the instructions set out on SIMS.
- Ensure that classroom doors are unlocked for registration and then locked at 8:50am.
- Ensure that staff take registration between 8.40 a.m. and 8.50 a.m. for the morning session and at 1pm (EYFS and KS1) and 1:10pm (KS2).
- Use approved codes, to show whether an absence is authorised or not.
- Register pupils electronically.
- When this is not possible, the office must be informed by 9.00am so that attendance can be recorded, including absences or late arrivals.
- Ensure that if your child has not been marked for morning registration between 8.40am and 8.50am that the school makes concerted attempts to contact parents/carers by 9.15am.

3.3 Pupils arriving after the registration period is over will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness, when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark. Failure by parents to make contact with the school will result in an unauthorised absence and may result in further action to ensure your child is safe.

3.4 **Absence, legally, has to be recorded** as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the DfE and in some circumstances to the LA. Only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

4 Authorised Absence

4.1 **Is when a pupil:**

- Is, in exceptional circumstances, absent with the prior permission of the school
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance
- Has suffered a family bereavement
- Has been excluded
- Is of traveller parents, who are travelling in connection with their work.

4.2 **An approved educational activity** is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity, or is receiving special off-site tuition.

5 Unauthorised Absence

5.1 **Is when a pupil:**

- Is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
- Arrives after the registration period has closed without an acceptable reason.
- Is away from school for any absence not authorised by the head teacher.

6 Holidays in Term Time and Penalty Notices

6.1 **Holidays in Term Time Education** *(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*:

6.1.1 The Government states that there is no right to holiday in term time and has removed the phrase, 'up to ten days holiday, in special circumstances', from the Education Act 2006.

6.1.2 The law states that leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

6.1.3 Following changes to the 2006 Education Act, which took effect from 1 September 2013, all schools - including St White's Primary School - are not allowed to authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.1.4 An application must be made in advance in writing. Any request made for a holiday during term time will be reviewed and if it does not meet the definition of exceptional circumstances, it will be declined and the pupil's attendance record will be marked as 'unauthorised' should the holiday still take place. The school will write to the parent/carer to confirm this and advise of the current guidelines regarding prosecution.

6.1.5 A fine may be issued per parent, per child, if unauthorised holiday of any duration is taken, and this may be issued without further warning. If parents are separated, a fine can be issued to each parent or carer even if they are not responsible for taking the child on holiday. The fine will be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will consider proceedings in the Magistrate's Court which could lead to a fine of up to £2500 or a period of up to 3 months imprisonment. The school will apply for a penalty notice for every unauthorised holiday which meets the local authority protocol.

6.1.6 For the purposes of education law, the department of education considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

6.1.7 This policy will be reviewed on receipt of updated guidance from the DfE or Local Authority.

6.2 Other Penalty Notices

6.2.1 A penalty notice may be issued where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours on a school day.

6.2.2 A penalty notice may be issued for persistent lateness of a pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed (recorded as Code U on the school attendance register). The school should issue a letter to parents warning that if there is a further unauthorised absence within fifteen school days, a penalty notice may be issued.

7 Appointments For Pupils

7.1 If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. However, parents/carers should avoid such arrangements where possible.

7.2 Parents collecting pupils from school mid-session should come to the school office to sign the pupil out. The class teacher and school office must be notified in advance. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary.

7.3 If the pupil is absent at registration, the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Parents must bring pupils to the school office to sign them in on their arrival or return.

8 Frequent Absences for Medical Reasons

8.1 When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, medical services may be consulted, including the school nurse service and appointment cards will need to be provided.

8.3 Where necessary, a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made.

9 Longer Periods of Absences

9.1 Pupils, who have been absent for a long period of time, will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work through a range of strategies agreed by the class teachers.

9.2 Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

10 Late Collection of Pupils

10.1 The school takes late collection of children very seriously. It accepts that emergency situations can arise due to unforeseen circumstances. Notification, however, must be given to the school as soon as the situation arises.

10.2 In the event of a child not being collected, the school will make every effort to contact their parents/carers. If this proves to be impossible, then the school will try to contact the alternative emergency name, who is authorised by the child's parent, to collect them on behalf of their parent/carer. If no contact has been established with the parents/carers, or emergency contact, within 45 minutes of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures i.e. it will contact the Children and Families Services emergency duty teams on 01452 614 194 to report their concerns.

10.3 Persistent late collection of a child will be monitored. On the second late collection in a term, without reasonable excuse, the parent/carer will be sent a letter reminding them to collect their child from school at 3:15pm. If the child is collected late a third time, a charge will be incurred and an invoice issued. The purpose of the charge imposed is to partly meet the additional costs that the school incurs from the late collection. In cases where a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the end of the school day, or after-school activity, a charge of £5 will be made to the parent/carer for up to 1 hour of non-collection and then £5 thereafter for each 30 minute interval that the child is not collected. The parent will be issued with an invoice

and expected to pay within the dates set on the invoice. Failure to pay will lead to further action being taken.

10.4 The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken and the calls made.

10.5 In extreme cases, persistent late collection could be considered as abandonment or neglect of a child. In the event that the school finds itself repeatedly looking after children who have been persistently collected late from school (more than three times in a term) the school will contact the Children and Families Services emergency duty teams on 01452 614 194 to report their concerns.

11. REWARDS

11.1 St White's Primary School actively encourages good attendance by recognising and rewarding excellent attendance of pupils and classes.

11.2 Pupils who achieve 100% attendance in a half term will receive a certificate and a coloured pin badge. There is a different colour for each half term.

11.3 Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the whole school year will receive an additional 100% attendance bar badge and a prize.

11.4 Weekly attendance trophies are given for the KS1 and KS2 class with the highest attendance in the previous week. These are given in the weekly celebration assembly.

11.5 The class with the highest overall attendance percentage will receive a trophy at the end of the school year.

11.6 The school will write to parents of pupils whose attendance has improved following concern letters or attendance meetings to thank them and offer further assistance.

11.7 The school will consider special awards for pupils with most improved attendance at the end of the year.

11.8 Those children who have achieved 100% attendance for a full year, will be used as ambassadors for the following year. They will be encouraged to share with their peers the benefits of 100% attendance and present the regular awards given during assemblies.

12. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

12.1 The attendance administration officer will monitor the registers in the morning and afternoon

to ensure they have been completed and to enter absence codes and comments.

12.2 Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.15 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return.

12.3 All telephone messages will be recorded in the absence diary.

12.4 If the school has been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

12.5 Where the register shows 5 separate late marks, during or after registration over a school term, school will contact parents.

12.6 Where the register shows 10 separate late marks after registration over the last 10 weeks the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. A written warning of this will usually be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

12.7 Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the headteacher who will contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is
unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at Shire Hall and where it is deemed necessary Social Services will be contacted.

13. The Law

Set out below are the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.
These requirements are contained in:
• The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
• The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

13.1 The law says that:

- By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education.

- As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

13.2 Once a child is registered at a school it is the parent/carers responsibility for making sure he or she attends full time and regularly.

13.3 If your child fails to attend regularly, even if they miss school without you knowing, the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

- Local Authorities may enforce:
  - A Parenting Order
  - An Education Supervision Order
  - A School Attendance Order
  - A fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly.
- Parents are responsible for making sure that their registered children regularly attend school and any alternative provision arranged for them.
- If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible.

13.4 **Unauthorised absence** may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

13.4 **Formal meetings** (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and Attendance plans will be drawn up.

13.6 **Elective Home Education** The school will follow procedures set out in GCC Elective Home Education policy and guidance for schools in providing information for families who inform the school that they are considering this option.

13.7 The school will follow procedures set out in GCC Elective Home Education policy in notifying the LA and removing a pupil from the school roll if parents decide on elective home education.

14 School Attendance Procedures

14.2 Administration staff will provide regular lists of pupils falling below 95% attendance.

14.3 Pupils falling below 95% attendance will receive a letter from the Head Teacher offering advice and support and Local Authority information about good Attendance.

14.4 Pupils falling below 90% attendance will receive a letter from the Head Teacher inviting parents to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance (or home visit).

14.5 Pupils falling below 85% attendance will receive a letter from the Head Teacher inviting parents to a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting.

14.6 Attendance Improvement Plans will be put in place and reviewed appropriately.

14.7 Attendance Improvement Meetings and Reviews will be documented.

15. Consistency of Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

16. Appendices

- **Appendix 1 -** Sample letters for school use
- **Appendix 2 –** Gloucestershire School Attendance Leaflet for Parents
- **Appendix 3 -** Gloucestershire School Penalty Notice Leaflet for Parents
- **Appendix 4 -** Gloucestershire Attendance Ladder of Intervention