



**Gladstone Primary**  
Academy



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| Policy:              | Attendance Policy |
| Owner:               | Paul Fountain     |
| Approving Board:     | Academy Committee |
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# **Gladstone Primary Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction**

Gladstone Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending the Academy regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole Academy community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Academy governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful Academy and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at the Academy, on time, every day on which the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the Academy community and look forward to coming to the Academy every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### **Attendance Expectations**

|         |                |
|---------|----------------|
| 98-100% | Excellent      |
| 96-97%  | Expected       |
| 90-95%  | Unsatisfactory |

**Less than 90% Cause for concern**

### **Attendance Leader**

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Academy's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the Academy. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body termly.

S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so Important:**

#### **Learning:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at the Academy is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from the Academy without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**In 2016-2017, 83% of children with poor attendance did not reach age-related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths.**

#### **Safeguarding:**

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend the Academy regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this Academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

Attendance  
Behaviour Management  
Health and Safety  
Access to the Curriculum  
Anti-bullying

Failing to attend the Academy on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of the Academy staff.

#### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in the Academy, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

## **The Law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

### *The Law relating to safeguarding*

*Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

## **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from the Academy has to be classified by the Academy (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from the Academy for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall during the Academy day, emergencies or other exceptional causes.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off the Academy unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the Academy day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at the Academy too late to get a **present** mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

**This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.**

Whilst any child may be absent from the Academy because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend the Academy. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 make things worse.

### **Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

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

### **Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the Academy:**

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met:

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period of any 8 school weeks (a maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at the Academy after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from the Academy (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on all subsequent days of absence (the Academy's telephone number is **01733 343908**);
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Call into the Academy and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence **if we have not heard from you** and on all subsequent days of absence;
- Conduct a home visit if absence is on-going or persistent and we are not able to contact the parents/carers
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

**Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about a number of matters, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

**The Local Authority Attendance Officer:**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the Academy at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the Academy may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

**Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The Academy day starts at **8:45am (the gate opens at 8:35am) on the Gladstone Street site (Reception and Year 1)** and **9:00am (the gate opens at 8:50am) on the Bourges Boulevard site (Years 2,3,4,5 and 6)** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8:55am on the Gladstone Street site and 9:10am on the Bourges Boulevard site** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9:05am on the Gladstone Street site and 9:20am on the Bourges Boulevard site** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to the Academy on time.

### **Leave of Absence:**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the Academy will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the Academy (**with at least four weeks' notice**) and/or different from that agreed by the Academy will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

### **Deletions from Register**

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to the Academy by the time that registration ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence the Academy is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from the Academy for a period of not less than 20 school days and

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);
- (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the Academy by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this Academy are:**

**Paul Fountain – Assistant Head teacher for Pastoral and Wellbeing**

**Anushka Daniels – Attendance and Admissions Officer**

**Rozina Fazil – Family Liaison Officer**

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**Summary:**

The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All Academy staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.



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I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at **Gladstone Primary Academy**.

Signed:

Child's Name:

Class/Form: