



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**ADOPTED DATE: JANUARY 2021**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Glemsford Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the education opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## **2. School's roles and responsibilities**

- 1.4 All staff (teaching and support) at Glemsford Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5 Attendance Leader – Miss Kelly Sorrell will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will maintain registration records and also ensure that up to date attendance data and any attendance issues are brought to the attention of the Headteacher. These details are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Details of any attendance issues are also sent to the E.W.O. on an official referral sheet.
- 1.6 Registration
  - i. The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (show overleaf). These are then transferred to electronic reporting by a clerical officer.

## REGISTER CODES

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

- ii. The register will be called promptly at **8.50am** and **1.00pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- iii. The registers will close at **9.00am** and **1.10pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **late/absent** and will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para. 4.4 on page 7).

### 1.7 Categorising absence

- i. A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii. Glemsford Primary Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absences, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, a referral form will be sent to the E.W.O. Discussion between the Headteacher and the E.W.O. will decide whether a warning letter is sent.
- iii. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**
- iv. If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- v. Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
  - a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example – “a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority”.
  - b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
  - c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
  - d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
  - e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belong.
  - f) The pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
  - g) The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
  - h) In other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

1.8 Approved educational activity - Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

1.9 Staff Training - The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receives sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately

## **2. Collection and analysis of data**

- 2.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. (See para. Above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 2.2 Attendance is monitored by the Headteacher by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils/students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 2.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

## **3. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

- 3.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Glemsford Primary Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school.
- 3.2 First-day calling – Glemsford Primary Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents; knowledge.
- 3.3 Meetings with parents – Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned) with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. The E.W.O. may be present at that meeting. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is evidence of a good reason for them.
- 3.4 Referral to the Educational Welfare Officers – If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 4 school day or more. Schools and Academies must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 8 continuous absences.
- 3.5 Lateness and punctuality – Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see Para. 2.3(iii) on page 4) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. (see para. 4.4).

If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

- 3.6 Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes are encouraged to be more prompt by their teacher.
- 3.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 3.8 For the same reason, it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, report to the school office.
- 3.9 Post-registration truancy – Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Glemsford Primary Academy takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If a child leaves the premises without an accompanying adult the police are called immediately. If a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents/carers immediately.

#### **4. Term- Holidays**

Glemsford Primary Academy will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday, in line with county policy.

Glemsford Primary Academy will **only** consider authorising holidays for:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- Parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Glemsford Primary Academy will respond to all requests for leave of absence, in writing giving the reasons for their decision within three weeks of the date the request was received by the school office.

Glemsford Primary Academy will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests i.e.: SATS.

**If a pupil has 8 or more unauthorised sessions (4 days) in an academic year, then this will lead to a Penalty Notice Fine.**

#### **5. Parents'/Carers' responsibilities**

- 5.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Glemsford Primary Academy.

5.2 Glemsford Primary Academy expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence and not condone unjustified absence from school.

5.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify the school office on the first day of absence by telephoning the absences line. (leaving a message)
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Glemsford Primary Academy will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **6. Pupils' responsibilities**

6.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance.

6.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

6.3 Pupils have a responsibility to report to the school office if they arrive late.

## **7. Governors' responsibilities (Section 175 (2))**

7.1 The Governing Body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## **8. Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:

### **Be healthy –**

- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- The school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

### **Stay safe –**

- Schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly.

### **Enjoy and achieve –**

- Good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings.

**Make a positive contribution –**

- Membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others.

**Achieve economic well-being –**

- Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

**REVIEW DATE: JANUARY 2022**

**CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:** \_\_\_\_\_

See guide for parents below

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### 1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration.

The morning register will be called promptly at **8.50am** and the afternoon register at **1.00pm**.

### 2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **9.00am** in the morning and **1.10pm** in the afternoon.

- If your child arrives between **8.50am** and **9.00am** he/she will be marked **late**.
- If your child arrives after **9.00am** he/she will be marked as **unauthorised absence**.
- If your child arrives between **1.00pm** and **1.10pm** he/she will be marked **late**.
- If your child arrives after **1.10pm** he/she will be marked **unauthorised absence**.

(Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. If a pupil is late on frequent occasions a meeting will be arranged between parents a member of staff to discuss reasons/difficulties for lateness).

### 3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence and each day they are absent. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### 4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement

### 5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

### 6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.



**7. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas visit to relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with extended family. Contact the Headteacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SAT's. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Headteacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**8. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

**9. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher or the Headteacher. Immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.