



# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Reviewed by the Local Governing Body: **Autumn 2018**

To be reviewed: **Annually**

Next review: **Autumn 2019**

Date Approved by the Genesis Education Trust Board: **Autumn  
2018**

*\*Except in the case of dismissal the term 'Head Teacher' refers to the Executive Head and the Heads of School (Federation). The power to dismiss is vested in the Executive Head Teacher or Head Teachers of individual schools. Executive Head/ Head Teacher/Head of School/Associate Head (henceforth referred collectively as Head Teacher, unless specifically stated)*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE document: *School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, November 2016*

## **1. ATTENDANCE**

### **Aims/Expectations**

Attendance and punctuality are important for Genesis Education Trust schools as we believe this plays a key role in raising overall pupil attainment. Good attendance and punctuality are clearly linked to children making good progress in their learning. It ensures children settle into school and experience the stability and security they need to achieve their best plus learning good attendance and punctuality habits for their success in future education and workplace environments.

- Children should be in school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless ill or attending a medical appointment.
- *The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible for their child's attendance and punctuality. Parents/carers are asked to help the school to help their child to get the best out of the education available to them, and enable them to reach their full potential.*

### **School Responsibilities**

The school will:

- recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and other relevant services to deal with any issues that arise.
- maintain accurate registers of pupil attendance and will contact parents if their child is absent.
- keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and punctuality record.
- ensure that school attendance figures are correct for Local Authority and Government reporting.
- encourage and value high attendance and punctuality rates.

### **Parent/Carer Responsibilities**

It is the parent/carer's legal responsibility to:

- ensure their child receives a full time education and attends school regularly and punctually. The expected attendance level at our schools is 96.5%.
- immediately inform the school office of the reason for any absence by telephone on the first morning of absence.
- not to arrange family holidays during term time. The school follows the DfE document: *School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, November 2016*: "Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time? Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm."
- arrange routine medical appointments outside of school hours.
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend. Learning Mentors are available to discuss individual issues and to offer parents/carers support as appropriate.
- be aware of letters from school which their child brings home.

### **Authorised Absences**

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for one of the following reasons:

- Illness:
  - Vomiting – *a child should stay at home for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea only if sickness and diarrhoea are associated with a virus/bug;*
  - Head lice – *children should come to school after treatment is begun;*
  - Conjunctivitis – *children should come to school after treatment is begun;*
  - Periods of absence of 5 days or more where medical evidence has been provided.

- Medical/Dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time (please make routine appointments outside of school hours). Proof of appointment (appointment card, confirmation letter/note from hospital/dentist/surgery etc) is required in order to authorise the absence;
- Religious holidays that are observed in the UK;
- Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement/birth of sibling;
- Weddings: in UK 1 day and abroad 3 days;
- Interview or entrance exams for new schools;
- Participation in a sporting event;
- Commercial/photographic work as per The Children (Performance) Regulations 1968.

If a child is absent from school through sickness for a period of 5 consecutive days or more, medical evidence must be produced to support the absence immediately upon their return. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the child's absence being coded as unauthorised. Examples of evidence that will be acceptable are:

- doctor's/dentist's appointment card;
- hospital admission/discharge letter;
- medication prescribed – please bring into school the prescription or empty packets/bottles which can then be photocopied.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

Absence from school will not be authorised for other circumstances, including but not limited to:

- looking after brothers, sisters and/or unwell parents (if a parent is unwell and is not able to bring their child to school, the expectation is that an arrangement should be made by the parent for another responsible adult to bring and collect their child from school);
- Appointments made for the parent/carer and not the child will not be authorised.
- Absences that have not been explained;
- Periods of absence of 5 days or more where medical evidence has not been provided.
- Holidays in term time that have not been authorised.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 the Government's persistent absence threshold is 10% (reduced from 15%). A child with attendance below 90% is classed as a 'Persistent Absentee', regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. Should a child's attendance percentage fall to below 90% a letter will be sent home to request a meeting with the head or deputy head of school, if a parent/carer fails to attend a meeting the case may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service and a letter of parental responsibility may be issued by the Local Authority.

Any pupil who has reached the Persistent Absentee mark or who is at risk of doing so will be carefully monitored by both the school and the Education Welfare Officer. Where attendance has fallen to 90% and below the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) can request that medical proof is provided so that the absence can be authorised. Parents will meet with the assigned SLT member beforehand to discuss this. Failure to provide medical proof will result in the absence being unauthorised. Minor ailments such as a slight cold should not lead to a failure to attend school.

If significant improvements are not made within the agreed period, parents/carers will be issued with a Notice of Parental Responsibility, after which the child's attendance will be closely monitored and if not improved will be followed by a School Attendance Panel meeting, which may result in the case proceeding to court.

### Registration requirements

- School registers are legal documents and are required to be taken twice a day.
- The parent of a child who is persistently absent or persistently late after the registers have closed can be prosecuted under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and the register would act as the main source of evidence in court.
- Children who arrive to school after 9:30am will be marked in the register with a U code which is an unauthorised late code and, following DfE guidance, will reflect as an absence for that session.
- If the school has to evacuate the building, the attendance register enables staff to account for the children present that day.

### School Procedures

| Level of Attendance | Action   |
|---------------------|--|
| <95%                | A standard letter to parent/carer pointing out the deterioration in attendance levels – including a reminder of the school’s target levels for attendance and the negative effect of irregular attendance on learning. Parent/carer required to provide an explanation and comments where necessary (eg, where the school has not been informed of reasons for absence).   |
| <90% (PA)           | This is referred, as Persistent Absence (PA), to the SLT<br>A letter to ask parents/carers to attend a school based meeting with the Headteacher. The meeting will investigate why pupil has not attended regularly, discuss detrimental effect on learning, reach agreements for rapid improvements over the next half term.<br>Parents/carers will be reminded that full attendance is the aim and that anything less than 96.5% will cause concern. Consider using a parenting contract between school and parent/carer.<br>Monitor attendance very closely and keep in regular contact with the parent, either to praise attendance levels or to show ongoing concern. |
| ≤85%                | Pupils deteriorating to ≤85%<br>If pupil has not been referred to the Education Welfare Officer this should be done and meeting to create a plan of action.  |

### The Educational Welfare Service:

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) work with parents/carers, children and schools to improve school attendance and punctuality. If a child’s attendance gives concern, the EWO will contact the parents/carers and may make a home visit or arrange a meeting at the school or the office. Continued issues of poor attendance or punctuality may result in court action under the Education Act 1996.

### Children Missing Education (CME)

The schools follow and implement: *Children Missing Education Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016* (including Annex A. To be reviewed September 2019).

- The school will notify the Local Authority if it is about to remove a pupil’s name from the school admission register under any of the 15 grounds listed in regulation 8, Annex A.
- Notification will include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent/carer, (d) the pupil’s future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground under which the pupil’s name is to be removed from the admission register.

- The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (*Annex A*).
- The school will notify the Local Authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. St Margaret's will follow the Missing Pupils LBBB guidance.

## **2. PUNCTUALITY**

The school day starts at St Mary's at 8.55am, St Margaret's at 8:45am (Reception to Y6, Nursery from 8:30am) and St Saviour's at 9am. Registers are completed promptly. If a child arrives late they will receive a late mark. Arrivals after these times should report to the office with the child to sign in the late book. An explanation should be given for lateness, preferably by the parent/carer.

Good punctuality is essential in order for a child to achieve high attainment and maintaining/improving behaviour. The school will:

- Keep accurate records of lateness.
- After 10 days late, the school's Attendance Officer will send a letter home regarding lateness and including a report stressing those days with a late code.
- Stress how much we care about children being punctual for school each day and how much their class is disrupted due to another child being late.

Continued Poor Punctuality:

- EWO to be informed of children whose lateness is causing concern
- Parents and guardians to be invited into school to discuss the issue
- Where necessary the Education Welfare Officer may issue a Notification of Parental Responsibility.

## **3. COMINGS AND GOINGS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

- The school expects that all appointments, other than emergency ones, are booked outside of school hours.
- Children returning to school must sign in the 'Signing In' book in the Main Office.
- Other than in an emergency, a letter or appointment card must be presented at the Main Office in order for the school to be able to authorise the absence.
- Notice must be given in advance if a child needs to attend an appointment, interview or education activity at another venue.
- If a child is returning from an appointment in time for a school meal, the office must be advised before 10.30am that day.
- Permission will not be granted for children to leave the school without a parent/carer having first signed them out at the Main Office.

Early collections will not be authorised for reasons such as:

- seeing off or collecting someone from the airport;
- going on holiday, birthday, wedding or other celebrations early

### **Children collected late from school at the end of the day**

Late collection can cause distress to children who are keen to see their parents and carers and should be avoided at all costs. Please inform the school immediately if you are running unavoidably late. Persistent late collection is deemed to be neglect and parents will be referred to Social Care.