"Together We Shine"

Thomas Holden Street
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Gaskell Community Primary School

Attendance & Holiday Leave Policy

Approval Date: March 2021

Review Date: March 2022

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Information for Parents

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- Maintain good time keeping

Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
Regular attenders settle into secondary school more easily

What constitutes good attendance?

In order for a child's attendance to be deemed good it must be 96% or above:

100% -98% Excellent Attendance
97% - 96% Expected Attendance
95% - 90% Risk of underachievement
89% - 85% Serious risk of underachievement
Below 85% Extreme risk of underachievement

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensure that their children attend the school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn, as required by law
- Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty
- Telephoning on the **first morning and every morning** of any absence to give us the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school
- Arranging all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays
- Providing appointment cards or hospital letters for all appointments during school hours

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- Sending us a note confirming the reason for your child's absence when s/he returns to school
- Frequent absence claimed as illness must be supported by medical evidence.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has any extended period of absence
- Making sure we always have your current contact numbers; this includes all telephone numbers, child minders and emergency contact details

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as necessary
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters, the school brochure, open evenings and pupil annual reports
- Publish our attendance rate on newsletters and the school website
- Collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance and punctuality
- Provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and on such connected issues as the appropriate categorisation of absence
- Provide for a clear and unambiguous hierarchy of sanctions
- Develop strategies which recognise and celebrate pupils' attendance achievements
- Set up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services such as Educational Social Workers (ESW)
- Stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time
- Help create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, an inappropriate curriculum, etc.
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the School Attendance Officer (EI Team) , who works with the school to review and support attendance and punctuality issues

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The Office Staff will:

- take telephone messages from parents/carers on the first day of absence and inform class teachers of reasons for absence so that registers can be changed accordingly
- telephone / text parents to find out reasons for absence when no notification has been given, particularly with children who are a cause for concern
- monitor registers to ensure guidelines are followed and entries are accurate
- produce electronic reports where appropriate
- Maintain a 'late ' list in order to monitor punctuality
- Collect the names of absentees each morning; patterns will be analysed.
- Report to the Attendance Officer on a daily basis.

Governors will:

- discuss attendance data, including trends and patterns at the Curriculum Committee meetings, acting upon any issues which arise
- ensure that attendance data is communicated to parents through the school website
- review the Attendance Policy on an annual basis

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

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Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Term time holiday/Cheap flights/visiting family
- Family weddings
- Parent's or grandparent's illness

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. The School Attendance Service (EI Team) may contact you where unauthorised absence continues to be a problem**. Unauthorised absence could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.**

Punctuality

- It is important to be on time as the first part of the school day is used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest that day. It is also a time for children to settle down by reading or another quiet activity so they are ready for lessons immediately after registration.
- The school is open from 8:45am. All children can come to school from this time. Morning registration is closed at 8.55 am. This is the time your child must be in school.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as 'L' late. This will be counted as an unauthorised absence and may result in a fine.
- All lateness is recorded daily and the reason for lateness if known will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts in the form of a report, should a prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness.

Some children/classes will be re-grouped for targeted learning/catch up. The curriculum is designed to be progressive, new topics are often introduced at the start of the week and

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the majority of teaching takes place during the morning. (Each day's learning builds on the day before.)

Late Collection

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns with other agencies.

Exceptional Leave - Term Time Leave of Absence

At Gaskell Community Primary School it is important that parents consider carefully the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying in final years.

Legal Requirements:

The school adheres to the legal requirements laid down by the DFE and:

- is open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year
- maintains computerised attendance registers in accordance with regulations
- accurately records and monitors all absenteeism and lateness
- clearly distinguishes between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DFE
- submits absence returns and publishes information relating to levels of attendance and absence and includes details of these in the school's prospectus and annual report
- sets annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations

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The Law

The law says **parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.** In exceptional circumstances, schools can allow parents to take their child out of class for up to 10 days in a school year.

If a child is taken out of school without prior permission from the Head teacher of the school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's record. This may result in parents being issued with a fine.

What Parents should Consider:

Please remember that **absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child** by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as:

- Close to exams or tests, for example Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) in Year 6
- During the first year at a new school
- At the beginning of a new school term

Only in an **exceptional circumstance** will term time leave be allowed. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form and make an appointment to the Headteacher at least 2 weeks in advance and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements.

If school refuses your request for term time leave and your child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted in your child's record and a penalty notice will be issued.