



George Carey Church of England Primary School

# Attendance Policy

To be considered in conjunction with our **behaviour** policy, **anti-bullying** policy, **inclusion** policy and **safeguarding** policy

Our mission statement is....

A Christian school for all, at the heart of the local community  
where everyone grows together in knowledge,  
understanding, friendship and love.

Date approved: Draft for approval by Governors

Date next review due: September 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Absence from school affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.**

Any child's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law. At George Carey CoE Primary School, we set aspirational targets for school attendance in order to ensure that our pupils come to school every day and make the best possible progress.

## **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

The school aims to promote a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.

We will:

- Advise parents & carers of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new pupils and on progress days
- Report to parents & carers termly their child's attendance in their progress reports/ parents evening
- Celebrate good attendance at assemblies
- Reward good or improving attendance

## **UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCES**

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

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- Parents & carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never properly been explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Activities such as shopping, looking after other pupils or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been formally agreed

- Appointments booked during school times that could have been booked outside of school hours

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, parents & carers and child.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the cause of the problem.

**If we notice that a child's attendance is beginning to drop (or is low when they start), we will contact the parents to offer a meeting with our Parent Support Advisor to provide the family with support. We endeavour to support families before their children's attendance begins to affect their learning. However, sometimes a child's attendance continues to fall (below 93%) this will be addressed through letters sent to parents or carers, highlighting the cause for concern. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the fullest support and cooperation from parents & carers to deal with this.**

**If the child's attendance still does not improve, a further warning letter will be sent and the matter will be raised with the relevant Educational Welfare Department through the completion of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) form.**

### **PUNCTUALITY**

Good time keeping is a vital skill for life. Being on time helps a child to be calm, relaxed and happy in school. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their teacher 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.

Start and end times differ depending on the year group your child is in. Timings are made exceptionally clear to families and are available in the foyer, in the parent handbook and published on our website.

The register is a statutory document and is taken twice a day. Each day counts as 2 sessions of attendance.

Registers need to be complete by 9.05am for Reception/KS1 & KS2, 9.10am for the ARP and 8.45am for Nursery. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be formally noted as late.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark to note that they are on site but this will not count as a 'present' mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

The afternoon register is taken at 1pm or 1.10pm for KS1, 1.35pm KS2, and 12.55pm ARP and 12.45pm for Nursery.

It is essential that pupils arriving and leaving school with a parent outside the normal hours are signed in and out from the school office. These records are used in the case of fire/emergency.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the head of school or Head of Inclusion to resolve the problem. **However, parents & carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.** We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and celebrating good individual and class punctuality.

### **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

**Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Schools should be notified of these appointments in advance. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should attend school prior to the appointment if possible and should be returned to school directly after the appointment.**

**Long term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence with a senior leader and the Welfare Manager.**

**If your child is absent the parent must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.30am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Where a child has had an on-going illness we require evidence of any prescribed medication.
- Send in a written note of explanation for all absences of more than one day on the child's return to school with necessary evidence eg flight details for delayed flights/cancelled flights
- For medical appointments during the school day – phone us to let us know in advance and provide evidence of the appointment.

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

- Text and follow-up telephone call the parent or carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Send a letter/text to all parents or carers within one week's return of the child from absence of two or more days requesting a note of explanation
- Invite the parent or carer in to discuss the situation with a senior leader if absences persist
- Refer the matter to an Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%

### **HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is strongly discouraged by the government, local authorities and George Carey CoE Primary School.**

It is the parent's or carer's obligation to apply to the school (in writing or at a meeting arranged with the headteacher) for leave of absence. It must be made by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides. All applications for leave must be made in advance and are at the final discretion of the headteacher and leave will only be granted in **exceptional** circumstances. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time as well as the attendance and punctuality record of the child.

We insist that parents & carers gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking the holiday. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be classed as unauthorised and local authority fines may be applied.

### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR ABSENCE IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**

Sudden serious circumstances do occur rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring their child to school. It is essential that the schools are informed by the parent or carer of the circumstances immediately so that the appropriate code can be noted in the register.

### **MONITORING ABSENCE**

- All school staff are committed to working with parents & carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible
- Attendance is reviewed on a termly basis where pupils identified as persistent absentees are noted for further monitoring. As a school, we have a duty to inform parents & carers of their child's attendance and how this can impact on their attainment
- George Carey CoE Primary School also keeps the local authorities (who are responsible for pupils' placements) informed of all their placed pupils' attendance. We are obliged to inform placing authorities when a child is absent for 10 school days or more but actually keep them informed of all our pupils' attendance records if they present **any** cause for concern
- All pupils who have 100% attendance and punctuality over a term will receive a special certificate in our final reward assembly of the term. Pupils are equally rewarded for improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- Children with 98%+ attendance – every form will be entered for a raffle prize at the end of each term.
- The headteacher and schools attendance officer, together with the chair of governors meets with parents & carers of pupils whose absence or punctuality are causing concern

### **THE ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

Parents & carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance and/or punctuality problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the schools may refer to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local authority.

With the school the EWO 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 use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from your local authority.

**POLICY REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy and all policies at George Carey CoE Primary School will be reviewed and updated by the leadership team & governing body as per our policy review cycle.

Signed (Headteacher).....

Signed (Chair of Governors) .....

Dated .....