



Girton Glebe Primary School

Attendance Policy

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| Approved by Headteacher | September 2023 |
| Review cycle | Annually (next review September 2024) |

Girton Glebe Primary School
Charging and remissions policy

Document Control..... 2

Document Control

| New Version Number | Key changes from previous version | Date of ratification |
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This policy applies to all children of compulsory school age at Girton Glebe Primary School.

1. Key Principles

- Children at Girton Glebe Primary School have the right to the best possible education.
- For children to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Children's ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy, achieve, and make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.

2. Context

Girton Glebe Primary School endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which children can enjoy and achieve. We acknowledge the proven correlation between high-level attendance and child outcomes. Girton Glebe Primary School's attendance strategy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal school procedures do not result in good attendance; a range of further measures, including legal action, must be considered.

3. Girton Glebe Primary School aims to:

- Emphasise the importance, to all children, of maximum attendance to school as an essential pre-requisite for making full use of all educational opportunities and to maximise individual achievement.
- Make explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers and children) the school's expectations on attendance levels.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards all matters relating to attendance.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance.
- Communicate to all relevant parties the legal position with regarding attendance and the categories of absence, which are deemed "authorised".
- Emphasise the need for parent/carers and the school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance.

4. Requirements/ Legal Responsibilities

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means the child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances. The child must also arrive on time and be in class for 08.50 every day. Irregular attendance leads to children missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential. It may also place children at risk and may result in their being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our children.

5. What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Attendance is a national priority; national data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high achievement and academic performance. In addition, all schools must submit data electronically every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by OFSTED.

Girton Glebe Primary School expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence

The simple facts: Children attend school for **190** days each year.

- **7 days** absence a year means that a child has missed approximately 40 hours of teaching time.
- **11 days** absence a year means that a child has missed approximately 70 hours of teaching time.
- **18 days** absence a year means that a child has missed approximately 115 hours of teaching time.

Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; what we look for are unbroken weeks (i.e., those where the child is marked present on all ten sessions) as well as a pattern of single day absences. Children should **not** have more than one or two broken weeks in an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

6. Authorised Absences

The Headteacher cannot authorise **any** leave of absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for **authorised** or **justified** absences:

- A child is ill or receiving medical attention. Please note further information on illness not being authorised under section - Unauthorised Absences.
- Days of religious observance, notified in advance.
- Absence due to family circumstances (e.g., bereavement).

There are other absences, such as **approved sporting activities / music exams** that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; professional discretion will need to be used in these cases as to whether the absence can be authorised.

If exceptional circumstances are being applied for an **Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances form** (see appendix i) is to be completed and submitted to the Attendance Officer via email to office@gg.tela.org.uk for approval at least **two weeks** prior to the absence.

The school expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours.**



7. Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers.
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of **authorised** absence above.
- Attendance has fallen to a level of concern that intervention has been required (Stage 2 Girton Glebe Policy for Attendance Concerns).

DfE guidelines state that the following activities would be classified as **unauthorised**:

- minding the house
- caring for relatives
- awaiting repair people
- shopping
- birthday or family celebration

There are clearly some grey areas. The DfE guidelines look at the area of Special Occasions and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised; for example, absence resulting from a child attending the wedding of a parent could be counted as authorised; a birthday treat to a theme park would not.

Please note that an application for leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday will not be agreed. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in a Penalty Notice of £60, for each parent/carer, for those who pay within 21 days and £120 for those who pay within 28 days.

This may also mean that you will receive Attendance Letters in line with the Girton Glebe Attendance Policy which in turn may mean evidence is required for subsequent absences relating to illness and medical appointments.

8. Persistent Lateness to School

It is the duty of parent/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

Regarding coding (appendix ii), if a child is late for school they will be registered with an **L** code. If they arrive after registers are closed (0930) this will mean that the absence will be unauthorised and registered as a **U** code.

The school's policy for managing lateness is as follows:

Stage 1

Letter sent to parent/carer stating number of lates to school.

Stage 2

Should lates continue a letter will again be sent to parent/ carer stating number of lates. This letter will also request parent/ carers to attend a support meeting regarding the child's punctuality and attendance.

9. Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents/carers to:

- Ensure their child arrives **on time** for the morning session; morning registration begins at 08.50. We will monitor persistent late comers; **parent/carers can be prosecuted if their child persistently arrives late**;
- If your child is ill, notify the school **on each day** of absence by **08.50am** via **email to office@gg.tela.org.uk** or **by phone 01223 276 484**.
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns you have about their child's attitude towards school.

In return Girton Glebe Primary School will:

- Contact home on each day of absence if no message has been received from parent/carers.
- Follow-up promptly any concerns parent/carers pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in school.
- Involve the SLT, SEND (where necessary) and pastoral members of staff to support children to re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances.
- Regularly and consistently remind children of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Acknowledge improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's attendance or any letters you may have received, please email the Attendance Team on office@gg.tela.org.uk.

10. Good Attendance

To promote good attendance and to emphasise its importance Girton Glebe Primary School offers the following:

- A weekly celebration for the *House Team* with the best average attendance.
- A half-termly celebration of the *class* with the best average attendance.
- Individual certificates awarded termly for children with 100% attendance.

11. Girton Glebe Policy for Attendance Concerns

High attendance levels are achieved due to staff working collaboratively together with children and families and requesting external support when needed. Below are the 3 stages as well as the staff involved in this policy.

Stage 1

Some concerns for progress/attainment due to level of absence

Interventions include a letter sent to parent/carers from a designated senior Leader in school informing them of the level of attendance. The **Headteacher** is kept informed. The **designated senior leader** will raise attendance concerns with the respective **class teacher**. They will advise the **teacher** on how to best support the child.

Stage 2

Risk of under achievement due to attendance level still decreasing with an increase of broken weeks

Interventions include a letter sent home to parent/carers from the **designated senior leader** informing them of the level of attendance. A meeting will be offered in this letter to discuss support that could be offered for the child. The **designated senior leader** and parent/cares will attend the meeting and suggested next steps recorded.

Further on specific absence may not be authorised without medical evidence from GP/Hospital/Dentist (parent/carers are informed of this in the letter). For example this evidence may be an appointment card/ copy of medication that has been prescribed.

Stage 3

Parent/Carers will be called to for a Parent Contract Meeting with the **designated senior leader** and the **Headteacher**. The child is also required to attend this meeting. At this meeting, available support will be discussed, and targets agreed to improve the child's attendance. Areas of discussion will include:

Peer / Staff relationships
Academic progress
Behaviour/Attitude
Home related difficulties
Medical conditions

Locality support will be discussed and offered. This is an Early Help Assessment which the school will apply for through the Local Authority. If accepted by the Local Authority, this may include a request from them that a Parenting Course is completed before further support can be offered. Further details of this can be found at:

cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support

Further information on your rights and responsibilities can be found at:

cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities

Stage 4

If attendance continues to fall, the case will be referred to the Local Authority for action. This may include a Penalty Notice being issued or the Legal Panel at the Local Authority making the decision that the case will be put forward for prosecution.

The School will continue to offer support to the child and family.

12. Local Authority Attendance Officer

The LA Attendance is a statutory service and a legal requirement. Their involvement is triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Persistent absence
- Lateness

At Girton Glebe Primary School the Attendance Office monitors attendance at a whole school level and specifically targets the children whose attendance falls to a level of concern. The Attendance Officer is also responsible for ensuring that Girton Glebe Primary School's policy and practice is compliant with the local authority's legal duties and processes. This includes ensuring that only the Headteacher authorises legal action.

13. Legal action

All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends Girton Glebe Primary School on a regular and punctual basis. Should any child's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to a Local Authority investigation. Where necessary, the Attendance Team will refer cases to the Local Authority for legal intervention. Girton Glebe Primary School and Cambridgeshire Local Authority work together in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 28 day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- **Prosecution for unauthorised absence:** It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered child at Girton Glebe Primary School. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

14. A Final Word

The school believes attendance levels are an indicator of how effective and caring a school is. Failure to attend can be an indication that all is not well with the children's wellbeing. Equally, consistent attendance is an **essential** pre-requisite for effective learning.

Girton Glebe Primary School takes attendance seriously and have put a lot of resources into creating an efficient and effective procedural policy. We urge you to give this matter the priority it deserves.

Appendix i – Absence Request Form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM GIRTON GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** used to allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. If leave of absence for exceptional circumstances has been denied and you take the child out of school, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice or face prosecution in court.

If leave is taken after permission has been withheld then this will be recorded as ‘unauthorised absence’. This will appear both in the school register and in your child’s report. As shown above a Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. This rises to £120 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Should a parent/carer, on whom a Penalty Notice is served, fail to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time, he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates’ Court where, on conviction, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a sentence of up to three months in prison may be imposed.

Should you wish to apply for a leave of absence please complete the form below.

I would like to apply for a leave of absence.

Name of child(ren) Year groups

Requested dates:
From To
.....
Number of school days missed

It is necessary to take my child(ren) out of school because:

I have other children in school for whom I am also requesting leave of absence

Names: (This information will enable us to liaise with other schools in our decision making).

I understand that leave of absence will only be granted in **exceptional** circumstances. Should this not be granted and I take my child/children out of school I am aware that I may be liable to a Penalty Notice, as stated above.

Signature of parent/carer **Date**

For office use only:

The above absence is: ☐ Authorised ☐ Unauthorised Current ☐

Signed (Headteacher) Date

Appendix ii

Absence Codes – Recorded on registers

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| A | Present at registration |
| B | Educated Off Site (Not dual registered) |
| C | Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) |
| D | Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU) |
| E | Excluded but no alternative provision made |
| G | Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement) |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| K | Exam |
| L | Late but arrived before the register closed |
| M | Medical or dental appointment |
| N | No reason for the absence provided yet |
| O | Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Day set aside exclusively for religious observance |
| S | Study Leave |
| T | Traveller absence |
| U | Late and arrived after the register closed |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience (not based working) |
| Y | Partial and forced closure |
| Z | Pupil not on roll yet |
| # | School closed to pupils |
| AEA | Authorised Educational Activity - counted as present. |

The Absence Codes have been updated by Capita and are now identical for all schools nationally.