

### Attendance Policy

#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

Our Academy is committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education at GLPA through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. We will contact parents where a pupil is absent from school without good reason.

#### **AIMS:**

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

#### **EXPECTATIONS:**

It is expected that all parents will support GLPA by ensuring their child(ren) always attend school unless illness or some unforeseen problem arises. Appointments at hospitals, medical centres, clinics and dentists should be made outside school hours unless impossible to rearrange. When there is a problem with attendance, parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss the issue with the Pupil and Family Support Worker and/or the AIO (Attendance Improvement Officer) and Head of Academy. If there are child protection concerns, then the Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.

*We expect the following from pupils:*

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

*We expect the following from parents:*

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact GLPA as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

*Parents and pupils can expect the following from GLPA:*

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.

- A quality education.

## **ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS**

Attendance is encouraged in the following ways:

- Registers are taken and accurately completed at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of good attendance on individual reports.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3 or when leaving one school for another. Relevant information should be shared with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Sending parents appropriate absence reports as and when necessary.

## **RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:**

When a pupil does not attend, GLPA needs to respond effectively:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents; the parents will be contacted early on the day of absence by telephone or by email if parents are not on the telephone. All emergency contacts will be called.
- Where there is no response, a home visit for a welfare check will be made by the Pupil and Family Support Worker, AIO or a member of the leadership team.
- If no contact can be made via the home visit and there are concerns for the child's safety, the police will be called for a welfare check.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the Pupil and Family Support Worker, Child Protection Designated Teacher and AIO for the academy and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a formal referral to Social Care for non-attendance.

## **Reintegration:**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.
- GLPA leadership team and /or Pupil and Family Support Worker will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.

- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. The success of the support programme will require the involvement of appropriate academy staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Support programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:**

Authorised absence is where the academy has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences

- Pupil illness.
- Family bereavements (up to 3 days).
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Transport not provided by the LA when it should have been.
- Children of service personnel who are about to go on deployment (up to 3 days).
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.

- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

**Leeds determines that a penalty notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of 5 days or more within a 12-week period. This includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absences. GLPA will be working within this framework.**

Parents should not take pupils on holiday during the school term. Green Lane Primary Academy does not authorise holidays during term time except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher. If a parent takes the child on holiday, the absence will not be authorised. Before authorising absence, the Head of Academy will consider the impact of the pupil's progress and attainment, the pupil's annual attendance figure and whether the period of absence falls during any national test or assessment.

Exceptional circumstances will only be granted in circumstances that are rare, unavoidable, significant and short.

Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted include:

- The funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling (up to a maximum of three days)
- Sudden loss of housing (up to a maximum of three days)
- Weddings of parents and siblings (up to a maximum of three days)

Examples of circumstances that are not considered to be exceptional:

- Holidays taken in term time because of lower costs or parental work commitments
- Pilgrimages by parents, such as the Hajj

GLPA is not responsible for setting work during a family holiday or any unauthorised absence. However, independent work is encouraged and will be valued by the academy on the child's return.

## **LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. It may be necessary in exceptional cases to require support beyond the remit of the academy or the AIO. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The Pupil and Family Support Worker can help the academy establish multi-agency meetings.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Family Support Workers- Extended Services
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

## **REVIEW**

The policy will be reviewed at any time during school year if there are changes to the legislation.

Initial Date: June 2013

Reviewed and amended August 2018 - LC

Reviewed Date: March 2020

Reviewed: March 2020

Agreed Policy within the Delta Academies Trust

## APPENDIX

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities....

### The Importance of Registration:

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. Registers should be collected from and returned to the school office.
- Manual registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.
- Authorised absences should be entered in red initially with the symbol for categorising the absence in blue or black.
- Where electronic registers are used, hard copies, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.
- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

### Categorising Absence:

#### Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence. The Department for Education believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems can produce the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both Las (Local Authorities) and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the Principal.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Principal.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class teachers who have trouble in receiving a parental note should inform the Principal.

### The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time:

The AIO (Attendance Officer) will work with head teachers to agree the most appropriate course of action for each individual case.

### Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off the site should not be marked as present.

The following activities fall within this category:

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.

- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.
- Academy staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid. Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Principal to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

#### Lateness:

Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Schools should have a policy on how long registers remain open, thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable but this can be shorter. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended. Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open, they may be marked present. Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence that is Late.

#### Removal from the school roll:

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2).

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal:

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Principal of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Attendance Improvement Officer to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Principal has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the school.
- Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.
- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory schools age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

#### Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

#### Pupils who are missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database.

#### How parents can help:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or

changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.

- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.

Agreed Policy within the

Date of recent policy review: March 2020

Next policy review: September 2022

*Victoria Honeyman*

Signature, Chair of Academy Advisory Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature, Head of Academy: Lucy Carlisle\_\_\_\_\_