



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### ALIGNED TO MARLWOOD CLUSTER ATTENDANCE POLICY

Required Review Frequency	FGB to determine – annually
Next Review Due:	December 2018
Committee Responsible:	Curriculum & Standards Committee, then FGB for approval
Document Location	School

Version	Approved By	Date of Approval	Key Changes
1.2	FGB	06/12/2017	Addition of Penalty Notices communication to parents as an appendix

#### **RATIONALE**

We want to do our best for all our children and believe that regular attendance at school is vital for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

#### **STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS**

The Education Act requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. In addition schools have a statutory duty to set an annual attendance target.

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

#### **AUTHORISED ABSENCES**

- Such as illness or other unavoidable causes.
- Medical appointments
- Special circumstances such as bereavement, attending funerals, etc.

#### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency or for medical appointments which cannot be arranged out of school time.

### **TERM TIME ABSENCE DUE TO HOLIDAYS**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

#### **Term-time holiday**

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The decision to abide by this new legislation with all term time holiday requests being unauthorised was adopted as the policy of the school from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013.

If parents feel there are exceptional circumstances they need to write to the Head Teacher outlining these circumstances.

If parents do decide to take unauthorised term time absence we ask that they contact the main office to inform the school of the child's absence by letter.

### **PENALTY NOTICES**

The school reserves the right to contact the Local Authority and request the issue of a penalty notice in exceptional circumstances for the following:

#### **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in any 7 week period. There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon:

- where unauthorised absences are recorded
- where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
  - a) the parent has not informed the school; or
  - b) the leave was not authorised; or
  - c) the child did not return on the agreed date
- where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed
- where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

#### **How much is the fine?**

- The fine is £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- For example a two parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 between 21 and 28 days.
- The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

For more information on this issue please read the South Gloucestershire parental guidance on Penalty Notices at the following link:

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/behaviour-and-attendance/school-attendance/authorised-and-unauthorised-absence-from-school/>

### **LATENESS**

A pupil arriving late may seriously disrupt not only his or her own continuity of learning but also that of other pupils.

Pupils who arrive late, (after register closure at 9:20am) should 'sign in' to record their presence in school.

The school will investigate persistent lateness and work with the parents to set targets for improvements.

### **MONITORING REGISTERS**

Attendance registers are monitored on a regular basis, where this falls below 95% and is cause for concern, the school will investigate further. When the attendance falls below 95% we will arrange an attendance meeting with the Head Teacher to discuss any issues or barriers to the child's attendance, unless there is a medical reason for the absence.

In accordance with local authority guidance, should attendance fall below 90% and is cause for concern, the FYPs, Family and Young Peoples Support will be contacted to promote attendance in conjunction with the school.

### **PROCEDURES**

Children should be in school at the start of the school day by 9am.

Any children arriving after this time will need to report to the office to be signed in. These children will be given a late mark in the register.

Those children who arrive after 9.20am, when registers close, will be given an absence mark (marked with a 'U' code), unless there has been prior information provided or a medical appointment.

The school day ends at 3.30pm

### **FIRST DAY CALLS**

All parents are asked to call the office to inform the school of an absence of any description. In the event of an absence that the school has not been informed about, the school will call home to ascertain the health, well-being and location of the child. If after 3 days the school is still unsure as to this absence further investigations may be started to ensure that the school is delivering its duty of care to the child.

### **MONITORING**

The governors will review this policy annually.

## APPENDIX A

### South Gloucestershire Council Penalty Notices - Information for Parents and Carers

#### What is a Penalty Notice?

Penalty Notices were introduced under Section 23 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to address unauthorised absence from school. It is a fine issued by South Gloucestershire Council to parents/carers of a child who has failed to attend school regularly and whose absence is unauthorised.

It does not require the parent to attend court but is an alternative to prosecution in the magistrate's court. Parents/carers who pay the fine in full within the time limits cannot later be prosecuted for the offence to which the Penalty Notice relates (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

#### Why have Penalty Notices been introduced?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority of the government and local authority because missing school may limit a pupil's attainment, disrupt school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

#### When might a Penalty Notice be issued?

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in 7 school weeks (i.e. 70 sessions). There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon:

1. where unauthorised absences are recorded
2. where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
  - a) the parent has not informed the school; or
  - b) the leave was not authorised; or
  - c) the child did not return on the agreed date
3. where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed
4. where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

#### How much is the fine?

The fine is £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

For example a two - parent family taking 2 children out of school for an unauthorised holiday would be liable for a total of £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 between 21 and 28 days.

The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

### **What can you do to avoid receiving a Penalty Notice?**

- ensure your child attends school every day and on time
- make sure your child knows that they cannot have odd days off school - 'Every Lesson Counts'
- speak to the class teacher or tutor if your child is beginning to miss odd days
- don't take family holidays in term time.

### **Is there an appeal process?**

There is no right of appeal against the Penalty Notice but if you believe it to be incorrectly issued to you, you should contact the Senior Education Officer immediately (number below).

If you believe you are not guilty of the offence and therefore decide not to pay the Notice, you have the right to represent your case at the Magistrates Court but you should seek legal advice before making this decision.

### **What happens if I do not pay?**

If you have not paid the Penalty Notice in full before the 28 days allowed, the authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

If proven, this could result in a fine of up to £1000 under Section 444 (1) or up to £2500 and/or three months imprisonment under Section 444 (1A), a Parenting Order or other sanctions at the Magistrates' disposal. A Criminal Court Charge of £150 will be imposed by the Court if a 'guilty' plea is entered and you are found guilty of the offence. If a 'not guilty' plea is entered and you are convicted after trial, the Criminal Court Charge imposed will be £520. You are strongly urged to seek legal advice if you are considering not paying the Penalty Notice.

### **Further information and advice**

Department for Education - School attendance: Statutory guidance and advice:  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance>

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com) 0808 802 0008

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) 08444 111 444

[www.aceed.org.uk](http://www.aceed.org.uk) 0300 0115 142

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## APPENDIX B



Almondsbury, Olveston, St Helen's, St Peter's and Severn Beach Primary Schools  
working with Marlwood Secondary School

17th July 2017

Dear Parents,

Each year, as a cluster of primary schools, we review our approach to managing attendance, to ensure that it is consistent across the local primary schools. This is important as we have families who have children in more than one of our local schools and so we want to make sure that attendance is managed in a consistent way.

Our shared attendance policy is available for parents to view on each of our school websites and it includes the criteria for which a Penalty Notice can be applied for by the school.

Penalty Notices were introduced under Section 23(1) of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 to address unauthorised absences from school. It is a fine issued by South Gloucestershire Council to parents/carers of a child who has failed to attend school regularly and whose absence is unauthorised.

As a cluster of schools, we have decided that from September 2017 we will be requesting that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices. This brings us in line with our local secondary schools and many other South Gloucestershire primary schools.

### **When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to a parent in one or more of the following circumstances where more than 10 sessions of absence are recorded in any 7 week period during the school year. There are 2 sessions per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon:

- where unauthorised absences are recorded
- where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised holiday are recorded and;
  - a) the parent has not informed the school; or
  - b) the leave was not authorised; or
  - c) the child did not return on the agreed date
- where the child is persistently late arriving at school after registers have closed
- where a combination of more than 10 sessions of a) to c) above have been recorded.

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### **How can I avoid receiving a Penalty Notice?**

- Ensure your child attends school every day, on time
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- Speak to the class teacher if your child is beginning to miss odd days
- Don’t take family holidays in term time

For more information, please read the South Gloucestershire parental guidance on Penalty Notices at the following link:

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Yours sincerely,

The Headteachers of Severnside Partnership Schools