Goodrich Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy
Date: September 2017

Headteacher: **Mrs. Karen Miles**

Governor: **Mrs. Rose Webb**

Last reviewed: **September 2019**
Policy Review date: **September 2020**

GOODRICH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Head teacher – Karen Miles

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Philosophy

At GOODRICH Primary School we promote a culture in which children enjoy coming to school, and do not want to miss out. We are committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DfE.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Herefordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to minimise the occurrence of poor attendance and absenteeism
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will:

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- Work with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.

Attendance will be an important feature of GOODRICH Primary School's SDP. Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

The Registration System

The School will use a computerised system (SIMs) for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes will be used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

In the event of computer failure paper registers will be kept. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning session (9:00am) and the beginning of the afternoon session (12:45 Infants 1.10pm Juniors).

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded in the correct code. Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

Lateness
Morning registration will take between the start of school at 9:00am and 9.05am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes after the end of registration (9.35am). Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Pupils who arrive after registration closes will be coded as an unauthorised absence.

Absence
If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on the each day of absence as early as possible. If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation by the close of registration the office is informed and our office staff will contact the parent/carer as a matter of concern.

Absence notes

A written explanation must be sent in for all absences. Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Monitoring
In instances where a child's attendance either falls below an acceptable level or shows a regular pattern of absence or poor punctuality, parents will be informed of the school's concerns. If attendance remains poor, the situation may be raised with the school's Education Welfare Officer and later referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service for further action.

A Welcome Back
At GOODRICH Primary School we promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence. It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Unauthorised Absence
Twice daily attendance records are checked. Parents will be contacted asking for a reason for the absence. If there is still no response a letter is sent, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Requests for leave during term time are referred to in the 'planned leave' section at the end of this policy.

Promoting attendance
The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/ carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

A weekly newsletter keeps parents in touch with school events and helps to foster the sense of a community.

An attendance award (Scooterboard time) is given to the year group with the best attendance and figures for each year group are presented on the Newsletter.

Monitoring attendance

Each term children's attendance rates are examined. If there is a problem with a child's attendance, either falling below acceptable rates or showing a regular pattern of absence or punctuality, then parents are informed of the school's concerns. The attendance of these children is monitored and if no improvement is noted a further letter is sent once again expressing concern and offering support. If attendance remains poor then it may lead to a referral being made to the EWS. See Appendix 1.

Attendance Target

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by a governor and the school business manager.

Our schools target is 97 % for the year.

Child missing from education

We believe all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life.' (Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities (DfE))

We understand that children that are particularly at risk of missing education are:

- pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- families of Armed Forces personnel
- missing children/runaways
- children who cease to attend a school

We have a duty to monitor pupils' attendance through daily registration and to inform the local authority of pupils who are regularly absent from school. The local authority must have in place 'robust procedures and policies' to enable them to meet their duty in relation to CME.

We have a duty to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. We are aware that under the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015' we have the duty to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. We provide a safe environment where we promote pupils' welfare. Within this environment we work hard to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation and extremism by promoting fundamental British values and for everyone to understand the risks associated with terrorism. We want pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in order to challenge extremist views.

See Child Protection Policy, Appendix 12 for more information.

PLANNED LEAVE

POLICY REGARDING REQUESTS FOR LEAVE DURING TERM TIME – 2013-on

1. PRINCIPLES

1. It is a legal requirement for children to attend school (The Education Act 1996, Section 444). The school places great importance on attendance. High attendance leads to high achievement as well as social and emotional benefits. School holiday dates are published in advance. The government has recently made amendments to their guidance (The Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments state that head teachers may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. These amendments come into force on 1st September 2013.

Therefore the school is not permitted to authorise any leave in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. See Appendix 2. Schools are in session for 38 weeks per year, so there are opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 14 weeks.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on:

a. what might be defined as exceptional circumstances;

b. procedures for applying for leave during term time;

c. the consequences of taking unauthorised leave in term time

2. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

It is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, but examples of what might be considered as such are given in legislation as:

- Religious observance
- Family crisis
- Service families
- Recent bereavement

Where there are other factors which the Head teacher may consider to be exceptional circumstances, this may be referred to the school's governing body.

3. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING

a. Applications for leave during term time should be made in writing to the Head teacher at least 6 weeks in advance of the planned leave or as soon as possible in unforeseeable circumstance

b. The exceptional circumstances to explain why leave during term time must be taken should be clearly stated.

c. The Head teacher will decide whether the leave during term time can be authorised and will write to the parent to inform them of the outcome. See Appendix 3

4. CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING AN UNAUTHORISED LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

Taking leave during term time without authorisation will have an impact on a child's learning. Parents who choose to take an unauthorised leave during term time must accept that this will have an adverse effect on their child's educational achievement. See Appendix 4

In cases of unauthorised leave the school may refer the matter to the Local authority who may issue parents with a fixed penalty notice The fixed penalty fine is collected and kept by the Local Authority, not the school. Further information is below

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

APPENDIX 1 -ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Letter 1

Dear

After reviewing our attendance figure for last term, I was concerned to see that *(name)* missed *(number)* of sessions out of *(number).* This equates to an attendance rate of *(percentage figure)* for the term.

There may be good reasons for such low attendance but any figure below 90% automatically triggers concern since there is a very strong link between high levels of attendance and high levels of achievement.

If there is difficulty with *(name's)* attendance which you feel is affecting the situation please contact me so that we can discuss and agree a way forward.

If you have already contacted the school, thank you for informing us of the reasons for the absences and we look forward to an improvement in *(name's)* attendance.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Miles
Head teacher

Letter 2

Dear

Further to my previous letter regarding *(name's)* attendance, I remain concerned to see that *(name)* has missed a further *(number)* sessions out of *(number).* This equates to an attendance rate of *(percentage figure)* for the term.

I would like opportunity to speak to you regarding *(name's)* attendance and would be grateful if you could contact me at school to arrange a mutually convenient time. We are sufficiently concerned that if the situation persists we may well involve the Education Welfare officer in any further discussions.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Miles
Head teacher

Letter 3

Dear

Despite my previous contact with you regarding *(name's)* poor attendance, I am concerned because there has not been any improvement. *(Name)* still missed *(number)* of sessions out of *(number).*

I am writing to inform you that we will be making a formal referral to our Educational Welfare officer who will be in contact with you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Miles
Head Teacher

Appendix 2 – THE LAW

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** previously allowed head teachers 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. Head teachers 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 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 Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

APPENDIX 3 -ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Letter 4

Dear

I refer to your request for authorised leave of absence during term time.

The government has recently made amendments to their guidance regarding requests for leave of absence during term time (The Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments state that head teachers and governors may **NOT** grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. The previously stated "discretion for schools to authorise family holidays in special circumstances" has been removed in the new legislation. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013.

This means that whilst I fully appreciate the contents of your letter unfortunately your request for authorised absence cannot be granted.

I should advise you that any absence that has not been authorised in advance would be treated as "unauthorised" and recorded as such in the school attendance register.

I hope that you will understand that we are restricted by these new regulations and no longer have the discretion that we were able to apply in previous years. Please refer to our Attendance policy for further details.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Miles
Head teacher

Mr N Crofts
Chair of Governors

Letter 5

Dear

I refer to your request for authorised leave of absence during term time.

The government has recently made amendments to their guidance regarding requests for leave of absence during term time (The Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments state that head teachers and governors may no longer grant ANY leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013.

The information you have given to me indicates that the leave you are requesting is in relation to exceptional circumstances and therefore you request for authorised absence is granted.

Please can you liase with the class teacher both in advance and after the absence to discuss how any disruption to progress and achievement by this absence can be minimised.

If you wish to discuss this matter further with me please let me know.

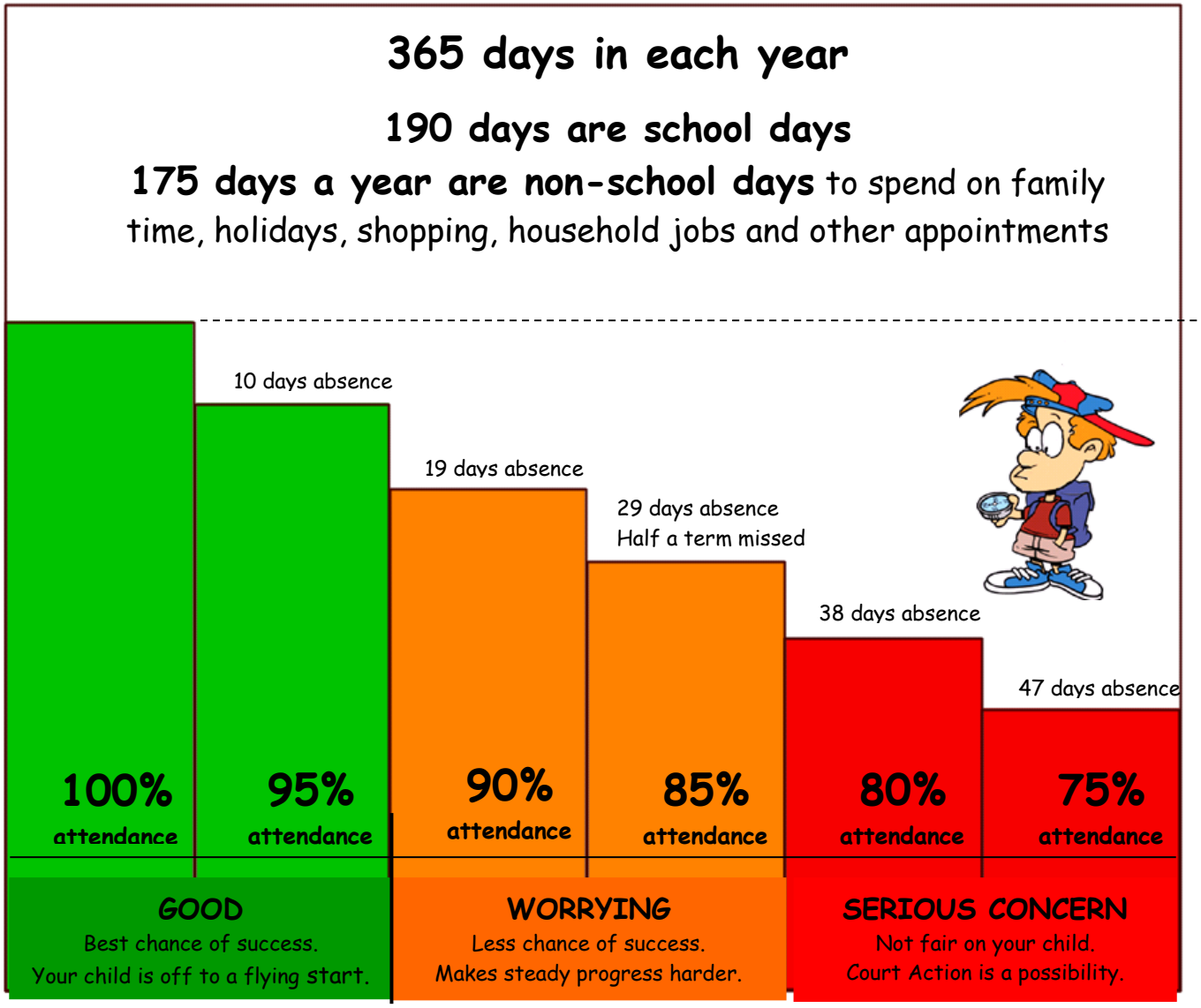
Yours sincerely

Mrs K Miles	Mr N Crofts
Head teacher	Chair of Governors

Appendix 4 – IMPACT OF LOW ATTENDANCE

Days off school add up to lost learning.

Did you know that an attendance of 85% each year means that 1 whole year of primary education is missed?



- Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve.
- Every school day counts.

To School