

# The Gold Rose MAT

Being the best we can be



## Attendance Policy

### **Scheme of Delegation**

Approver: *Executive Principal*

Reviewer: *Trustees*

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### **Category**

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B – statutory policy required by other legislation impacting directly on schools

**C – statutory other**

D – document referenced in statutory guidance

NS – non statutory

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Why do we need a policy?

The law requires all parents/carers to make sure their children receive a full time education suitable to their needs. This means attending school regularly and being on time. Schools and Local Authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

Good school attendance helps children learn and achieve and, for this reason, The Gold Rose MAT, along with Slough Borough Council and other schools in the area, are committed to improving attendance.

Children who regularly attend school are likely to:

- Learn more
- Meet friends
- Get good examination results
- Have a better chance of getting a good job

Poor attendance can result in children:

- Getting left behind
- Having difficulty with the work and exams
- Not meeting friends and becoming isolated

Examples of poor attendance are occasional days off on a regular basis, long periods out of school, holidays in term time and regular lateness.

**If a child misses just five days each term over all the years he or she is at school, this is equivalent to missing one whole school year.**

### Who does the policy apply to?

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and is therefore shared with parents/carers and pupils on admission to the school. In law compulsory school age for all children is from the start of the term commencing on or after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, until the last Friday in June during the academic year that the young person becomes 16 years old. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends suitable full time education and that he/she arrives punctually every day.

### How was the policy developed?

The policy is underpinned by the principles established in the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidelines from both the Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Authority.

## **What does the policy do?**

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance, the governors and staff at this school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that this happens. This policy ensures that this takes place efficiently and effectively.

## **Why it is important for children to attend school regularly and to be punctual**

Every day of education and every lesson matters. In the National Curriculum where there is built in progression, children who are persistently absent soon get behind with work and consequently do not understand lessons when they return. Children who are persistently late miss the introduction to lessons and to the school day in general, often leaving them unsettled for the rest of the day.

Research from the DfE demonstrates that there is a clear link between attendance and academic performance:

*.. pupils with no absence are 1.6 times more likely to achieve level 4 or above, and 4.7 times more likely to achieve level 5 or above, than pupils that missed 15-20 per cent of all sessions.*

The DfE research also demonstrated that overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.

*“Absence and attainment at key stages 2 and 4: 2013 to 2014”  
- Department for Education published Mar 2016*

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This policy ensures that all staff in our schools are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

What we do to instill the importance of and ensure good attendance and punctuality amongst our children:-

- Raise awareness of attendance and punctuality issues amongst all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensure that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and on time.
- Equip children with the skills needed to take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality appropriate to their age and development.
- Maintain clear effective communication channels with all stakeholders on school attendance matters.
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and following up cases of poor attendance and lateness.
- Support pupils and parents/carers experiencing any difficulties at home or at school, which are preventing good attendance.
- Develop and implement procedures to follow up on non-attendance in school.
- Establish good learning habits that enable all pupils in our trust to achieve a key Gold Rose MAT aim of demonstrating at least one achievement every day or week that is personally exceptional.

## **3. PROCEDURES**

The schools will undertake to follow the procedures set out below:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations of the school to all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give details of any absences and lateness.
- Reward children with 100% attendance, termly and annually.
- Follow up all absences if parents/carers have not communicated with the school on the first day of their child's absence.
- Follow up lateness with parents/carers if a child is persistently late.
- Not authorise any non-essential absence taken during term time.
- Work closely with parents/carers to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Follow Slough Borough Council policy and guidance in relation to fixed penalty notices

- Refer to the Attendance Improvement Officer in Slough Borough Council any child who meets their thresholds for attendance as published on their website.
- Report attendance statistics to the Department for Education and Slough Borough Council, as required, and seek advice and support from Slough Borough Council when necessary.
- Ensure all staff are aware that they must report any attendance or punctuality concerns to the School Attendance Officer
- If a pupil deemed 'at risk' is absent without explanation the school's Child Protection Officer will inform the relevant Social Worker.
- If a pupil is in public care (Looked After Children) the carer, social worker and education co-ordinator will be involved appropriately.

The processes for implementing these procedures in schools within The Gold Rose MAT are set out below.

#### **4. REGISTRATION**

- **Cippenham Primary School**

The school day at Cippenham Primary starts at 8.45 am.

Registration takes place at 8.55 am promptly for all classes.

Any pupil entering the school after 9.00 am will be deemed as late and registered accordingly. Registers close at 9.30 am.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be registered as late after register has closed unless they have a valid reason for being late (e.g. emergency dental appointment).

Any pupil who does not attend afternoon registration (12:50 pm in Years Reception, 1 and 2, 1.05pm in Years, 5 and 6 and 1.20pm in Years 3 and 4) and who does not have a valid reason for absence will be registered as taking an unauthorised absence for the whole afternoon session.

Electronic registration will be taken by the class teacher or their representative during registration time. In the event of the electronic system failing, paper copies will be used, provided by the school office.

Any pupil arriving at school after registration time must go straight to the school office to sign in. Parents/ Carers accompanying children at this time must provide a valid reason for lateness. If the pupil is late for a valid reason their absence will be marked as authorised. If no proof of a valid reason is provided, and it is after the register has closed, then the lateness will be regarded as late after the register has closed.

- **Cippenham Infant School**

Pupils may enter the classrooms from 8.50am, with the bell sounding at 9.00am. By this time pupils should be in class for registration. The classroom doors are closed at 9.00am and latecomers need to enter via the school office.

Registers close at 9.30am. The school uses attendance register books, which are completed in black or blue ink. Absent children should be marked with an empty red circle, for the appropriate code to be entered by the office staff.

Any pupil arriving at school after registration time must go straight to the school office to sign in. Parents/ Carers accompanying children at this time must provide a valid reason for lateness. If the pupil is late for a valid reason their absence will be marked as authorised. If no proof of a valid reason is provided, and it is after the register has closed, then the lateness will be regarded as late after the register has closed.

Any child who does not attend afternoon registration (1:30pm) and has no valid reason will be registered as taking an unauthorized absence.

## **5. LATENESS**

Parents/carers will be written to if their child arrives in school after 9.00 am two times in one week or is collected 15 minutes or more after school has ended three or more times in one week (a combination of these that exceeds 3 lates in a week may also prompt a letter). Any parent/carer who receives three letters will be asked to come for a meeting at the school to address persistent lateness and improvement in punctuality will be expected. Failure to improve after this point may result in the SBC Attendance Improvement Officer being notified and further appropriate action being taken.

## **6. ABSENCES**

Parents/Carers are expected to inform the school by 9.30 am of a pupil's absence and this information will be recorded by the school. The school can insist on medical evidence being provided before authorising an absence. Any cost that this may incur will be borne by the parents/carers. Unnecessary absences will not be authorised by the school. Routine medical / dental appointments should be made outside school hours.

Once registers are completed, the school will contact parents/carers of pupils on their first day of absence to request a reason for absence if no contact has been made. Any pupil who has been absent for more than two days without contact may be visited at home.

Persistent absence will be followed up by the senior member of staff responsible for attendance. If a pupil's absence persists the matter may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer, SBC.

As it is the legal responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure the child attends school regularly, they should make suitable arrangements for the child to attend if they are unable to bring them themselves. Failure to do so is an unauthorized absence.

If a child is likely to be absent for more than one day the parents/carers should make contact with the School Attendance Officer to discuss the situation. Regular contact

should be maintained until the child returns to school. School work can be provided for the pupil when appropriate.

## **7. LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS**

Schools in The Gold Rose MAT do not authorise absence (other than medical) taken during school time, except for:

- hospital appointments (documented)
- one day for recognised religious observations in the academic year that take place during term time.
- Attendance at external examinations eg 11+ tests

Parents taking unauthorised leave must inform the school in writing prior to the leave being taken. If a child has extended periods of unauthorised absence Slough Borough Council will be informed. When a child is absent for 5 school days in any 12 week period a fine will be issued through Slough Borough Council. If a child is away from school for more than 20 days they will be taken off roll and the parents/carers will be required to reapply for a school place on the child's return through Slough Borough Council.

## **8. GENERAL INFORMATION**

If a parent/carer requires information regarding attendance or absence, this can be requested from the School Attendance Officer. Information is also available on the school websites.

## **9. ATTENDANCE LEVELS**

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, or a pattern of absence emerges over a period of weeks, this will be brought to the attention of the senior member of staff in charge of attendance and a letter will be sent to parents/carers regarding the concerns. Note will be taken of any known hospital stays or other authorized absences previously discussed with parents/carers.. Depending on the circumstances, an investigation may then be instigated as to why the attendance is falling and a discussion with parents/carers will follow. If the attendance does not improve or continues to deteriorate, the parents/carers may be asked to attend a meeting where further appropriate action will be discussed . This gives the parents/carers an opportunity to discuss the reasons for absence and /or lateness and a plan will be put together to improve attendance / punctuality. If the situation is not resolved the matter may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer, SBC, who may request an Attendance Panel Meeting to which parents/carers will be invited to attend. The outcome of this meeting could result in a fine or prosecution proceedings may be put in place.

When a pupil's attendance drops to 90% or below they are regarded as being a persistent absentee. The school expects attendance to be above 95%.

## **10. ABSENCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

Any pupil that needs to leave the school during the normal school day must be signed out by the School's Attendance Officer or a member of the Leadership Team. If a pupil has a medical/dental appointment their parents/ carers must confirm the appointment prior to the pupil leaving the school –usually by a text message from the surgery/ dentist. If this is not

possible then a slip will be given to parents which they should get stamped at the surgery/ dentist and return to the school.

If a pupil becomes unwell during the school day he/she will be seen by a First Aider for assessment. If it is deemed necessary for the pupil to go home a member of staff will contact the parents/carers to arrange for the pupil to be collected. A pupil will not be allowed to go home during the day unless authorised both by the school and the parent/carer. The pupil will then be signed out on leaving the school. If the pupil then misses an afternoon session because of this, he /she will be marked as having an authorised absence. If a pupil leaves the school premises without authorisation and/or without signing out, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

In implementing this policy, staff will also have regard to policies relating to Safeguarding, Child Protection and e-Safety. The over-riding principle at all times is the safety, security, enjoyment and achievement of the pupils.

## **11. POLICY IMPACT**

If the policy is successful the schools will see an increase in attendance at the end of each year and a decrease in the number of persistent absentees.

## **12. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed formally by The Gold Rose MAT every two years, or earlier as required.