



SAXON WAY
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Attendance Policy

Date: September 2020
Review Due: September 2021

Reviewed Annually

Ethos and Aims

At Saxon Way Primary School we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The school aims at 100% attendance for pupils and promotes good punctuality now and for the future.

Parent and carers should be aware that if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 / 444 1a Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent may cause disruption to others when they arrive. They are likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson or a new concept, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents, Carers and Pupils

Parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive fulltime education. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible; the school expects to be contacted on each day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, by personal contact, email or by written note. The reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school should be stated. Pupils are expected to arrive at school punctually. Parents are expected to notify the school of changes to contact details and if there is a change in home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

Persistent lateness can be seen as absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by the school. Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the morning session begins, prepared to begin the school day. Pupils should be in their classrooms by 8.50am.

Morning registration times are 8.50am for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. The morning registers close at 9.20am. Should a child arrive after this time they will be given an unauthorised absence mark.

Afternoon registration time for Key Stage 1 pupils is 12.30pm. The registers close at 12.45pm
Afternoon registration time for Key Stage 2 pupils is 1.30pm. The registers close at 1.45pm.

If families decide to remove their child from school or to send their child to a different school they must inform Saxon Way Primary School as soon as possible in writing.

The School will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;

- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers.
Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence.
In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be required.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Inform parents/carers of the % attendance of their child/children at parents evening and in their annual report;
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Send letters to parents highlighting falling or poor attendance.
- Liaise with outside agencies when necessary to support families.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Advisory Practitioners (AAPs) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- Invite parents/carers in for Attendance Clinics to discuss reasons for absence and to offer support to improve attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the AAPs. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by AAPs may result in further actions, eg a Penalty Notice or parental prosecution.
The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is currently £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine may result in the Local Authority prosecuting.
- Notify AAPs after 5 (10 sessions) days unexplained absence.
- Request medical evidence after the 3rd day of any consecutive absence
- Request medical evidence for persistent absentees

Leave of Absence

The school can approve absence. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the kinds of reasons parent/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence. The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below:

- Illness, emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours.
- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Exclusion (Excluded pupils are treated as authorised absence. They will remain on the school's register unless permanently excluded when the situation has to be reviewed)

Saxon Way Primary School does not authorise a leave of absence for extended periods during term times e.g. extended holidays or visiting family abroad.

Medical Evidence

From the third day of absence, medical evidence will be required and a return to school date. If medical evidence is not provided, the school will inform the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP), who may arrange a home visit. If a child's attendance becomes a cause for concern, the parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance clinic to discuss any issues with the School Attendance Team and the school's Attendance Advisory Practitioner.

Holidays during Term Time

We operate the DfE zero tolerance approach to extended holidays and we notify parents/carers of this so that they can make an informed decision about removing children from school for this reason. We refer children with unauthorised extended holiday absence to the local authority who arranges for fixed penalty fines to be issued. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine may result in the Local Authority prosecuting.

An unauthorised absence referral will be made to the AAP if, in any 6 weeks, 10 unauthorised sessions have been recorded.

Breakfast Club

Saxon Way runs an established Breakfast Club. The aim of the club is to promote punctuality and good attendance. Breakfast Club may be a useful option for families where there are barriers to punctual attendance. Breakfast Club is run by trained school staff and is open from 8.00am.

Late Collection of Children

Persistent late collections are monitored and the school attempts to support parents/carers with this by helping to develop strategies to improve their punctuality in collecting their children.

There are a number of free after school clubs available until 4.15pm, but these must be booked in advance.

Additional Child Care is available also until 4.15pm at a cost of £1 for each 15 minutes or part thereof. Children who are late to be collected without prior arrangement will attend this provision and a charge will be made – payable on line through parent pay.

Persistent late collections will be discussed with Medway Children's Social Care.

School Procedure

The school monitors attendance and lateness weekly. Issues relating to pupil attendance are followed up during regular review periods. Attendance is a high priority and is celebrated weekly in assembly with the presentation of our Attendance Bear. 100% attendance is celebrated termly.

The Department for Education expects a child to have an annual school attendance of not less than 96.4%. By working together we that every child achieves that goal

Head of School: Angela Sandow

Inclusion Manager: Tracey Sears

Attendance Advisory Practitioner: Chrissy Clarke