

GARSTANG COMMUNITY ACADEMY – Whole School Attendance Policy Sep 2016

Mission Statement

Garstang Community Academy will encourage good attendance for all students, by offering an environment in which students feel valued and part of the whole school community. We value each student as an individual and endeavour to support them throughout their time at the school to achieve their full potential.

Aims

We will

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- Continue to develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets (Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) 2005)

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

We will develop a procedural framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for

- Parents and carers
- Students
- School staff
- Governors

to complement this policy, and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

This procedural framework will include guidance on

- Registration
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Consistent use of symbols for authorised absence
- Leave in term-time
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual students
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Lancashire County Council
- Systems for reintegrating students who have been absent
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and Action Planning
- Appropriate alternative curricular arrangements

Leave in Term-Time

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher and/or designated staff whether leave is authorised or not. Parents must consult with schools prior to booking any time away. If parents choose to take their child on leave without negotiation or consent they may be referred to the Local Authority, which may result in a penalty notice being issued.

Use of Penalty Notices

Garstang Community Academy may request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence, in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. The circumstances under which such requests will be considered will be set out in the procedural framework on attendance (see appendix).

Partnership Working

Garstang Community Academy will work with other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school. The criteria for referral and areas of responsibility for staff will be set out in the procedural framework.

Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning

Garstang Community Academy will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future Action Planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters.

Review of Whole School Attendance Policy

Garstang Community Academy will review this policy on a regular basis and will review the associated procedural framework at least annually, or as required if sooner.

APPENDIX 1

Registration

Morning

In form or assembly from 8.40am – 9.00am:

/ or \: Present
N: Absent
L denotes Late to Registration

After 9.00am at Reception:

Noted on Reception on the Lates list and transferred to SIMs using:

L: Late no good reason
I : Ill before school
M: Medical Appointment
U: Late with no reason after registers close at 9.30am

Afternoon

In form from 2.00pm – 2.05pm;

/ or \: Present
N: Absent
L denotes Late to Registration

After 2.05pm at Reception:

L: Late no good reason
\ : Present (with a member of staff etc)
U: Late with no reason after registers close at 2.15pm

Unauthorised Absence

In cases where sickness/ill health are used as reasons for absence the school reserves the right to refuse to authorise absence which is not corroborated with medical evidence.

Noted with an N (under 2 weeks old) or an O (over 2 weeks old) on SIMs

Any absence which has not been support by a note/e mail/ fax or phone call from home or where parents have been contacted to say the absence will not be authorised by school.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices can be requested where there is a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 days) in any 1 term or 14 sessions/7 days of unauthorised absence in 2 consecutive terms. Unauthorised absence includes late arrival to school and unauthorised leave for holidays in term-time.

Penalty Notices are issued one per parent per child and they are discharged at £120 to be paid in 28 days OR £60 to be paid in 21 days.

Symbols Used on SIMs Attendance Module

| Code | School Meaning |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) |
| \ | Present (PM) |
| B | Educated off site |
| C | Other authorised circumstances |
| D | Dual Registration |
| E | Excluded |
| F | Extended family holiday (Agreed) |
| G | Extended family holiday (Not Agreed) |
| H | Family holiday (Agreed) |
| I | Illness |
| J | Interview |
| L | Late (Before registration closes) |
| M | Medical / Dental Appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided for Absence (under 2 weeks old) |
| O | Unauthorised Absence (over 2 weeks old) |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious Observance |
| S | Study Leave |
| U | Late after registers close (9.30am and 2.15pm) |
| V | Educational Visit |
| W | Work Experience |
| X | School closed to pupils |

Leave of absence

H – should only be used where leave for holidays has been authorised.

APPENDIX 2

ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY AWARDS AND CONSEQUENCES

These guidelines are driven by the need for students to be ready for the expectations of the workplace. It requires all members of the school community to follow it and where necessary lead by example. To maximise their potential and fulfil their ambitions the students need to respond positively to the guidelines and then reap the benefits from having done so.

Awards

- 1) Twice yearly anyone with 100% attendance will be awarded a certificate.
- 2) Twice yearly the form with the best average attendance will be awarded a prize.
- 3) Each year, any student with at least 97% attendance and no unauthorised absences together with no c's for behaviour will be put in a raffle. 1 student to be selected and given a prize.
- 4) Students with at least 93% attendance will have the opportunity to go on school visits.

Consequences – FORM TUTOR/TEACHER

- 1) Late to school without a valid reason – Form Tutor will mark on SIMS in appropriate cases. Attendance Officer will warn in first instance and thereafter each late will receive a C4. More serious cases will move onto C5.
- 2) Late to lesson – class teacher to record this and respond appropriately for persistent cases.
- 3) Missing from lesson – 1st offence C5 – 2nd offence ISOLATION.
- 4) Truancy – placed on first response list – loss of free time at breaks and lunchtimes for a week.
- 5) Out of lesson with no note – back to lesson – class teacher to place them on C4. (Each teacher to be given 2 slips for students to leave lesson for a valid reason).

Attendance – AH/JE (SLT for attendance/Attendance Improvement worker)

- 1) Form Tutors to work with low risk attenders (>90%) who are slipping.
- 2) JE/AH to intervene with low attenders (<90% or >90% with many broken weeks). See below for process to be worked through so that each stage only follows if previous stage unsuccessful.
 - a) JE/AH talk to student to establish reasons.
 - b) Student registers with AH/JE to further improve communication and establish reasons.
 - c) Contact with parents to see way forward – meeting, contract, support etc.
 - d) Work with Court Office to resolve.
- 3) JE/AH to keep PL/SLT for each year group informed and may request that they play a role in improving student attendance.

APPENDIX 3

ACADEMY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS OF CONCERN

ACADEMY TARGETS: ATTENDANCE – 97% UNAUTHORISED – 0.3%
PERSISTENT ABSENCE – <5%

Action will only be taken where the attendance has no good authorised reason or will be a support to the students learning. There will be opportunities to get support from the school nurse, school counsellor, inclusion or other agencies should individual circumstances require it.

Sanctions will be issued where the student fails to meet the targets set out in the support/improvement plans as follows:

- 1) Loss of free time (breaks and lunch-times).
- 2) Loss of own time outside school hours (after school detention).
- 3) Loss of opportunity to go on school visits.
- 4) Penalty Notice (if criteria is met).

How these are issued will depend on the degree of which there is failure to meet the targets.

Unauthorised Absence

Attendance Officer to follow this process (steps) where appropriate

- 1) Talk to student asking for a note to be brought (this can be done by placing note in register).
- 2) Contact parent/guardian to ask for clarification.
- 3) Refer to AH.
- 4) 10 sessions/5 days unauthorised in a term or 14 sessions/7 days unauthorised in 2 consecutive terms may result in the issuing of a penalty notice.

APPENDIX 4 TAKEN FROM LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL GUIDELINES

What can you do to help your child at school?

Make sure your child goes to school regularly, arrives there on time, and keeps to the school rules. Start good habits at an early age when your child is in primary school.

If your child is unable to attend school, contact the school on the first day of absence.

If you think your child may have to miss school for some important reason, contact school in writing, well in advance to talk to them and seek their advice. Show an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school. If you suspect that your child is truanting or unhappy at school you should contact the school.

Data Protection

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, Lancashire County Council is a "Data Controller" and there is a nominated person in the authority called the Data Protection Officer who deals with requests for access to information.

To provide an effective service, it is necessary to process personal data and to maintain written and computerised records. Such data may sometimes be used by Lancashire County Council in legal action.

If you want to see the information held about yourself you can do so by contacting the Data Protection Officer on 01772 533974 or by writing to them at PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8RJ.

Leave and lateness in term time

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday during term time. Taking holidays during term time means that children miss important school time. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later.

The time you have to prepare your child for his or her future life is very precious. There are just 190 statutory school days in each year. If your child were to miss 1 day a week for their whole time at school, they would miss the equivalent of 2 years' school! That would be like not starting school until they were 7 or leaving at 14. Regular lateness can also add up, and can mean your child is missing vital work that has to be caught up on. It also disrupts lessons and can earn your child a reputation they would rather not have. The law deals with lateness and non-attendance in exactly the same way.

At what age can children leave school?

By law, compulsory education for all children in England ends on the **last Friday in June** for the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Your child cannot leave school until that date. Even if they have received their National Insurance card before then, it is still against the law for them to leave school and begin full time work.

Child employment and entertainment (including modelling, performances and sporting activities)

Your child must be 13 or over to undertake any work, whether paid or not. They must be given a licence by the Local Authority before starting work or such work will be illegal and your child may not be covered by the employer's insurance. There are certain kinds of work which are not allowed, some depending on the age of your child. If your child wishes to model,

perform or entertain on stage, film, TV, radio or at any other stadium or public venue, they are likely to need a modelling or entertainment licence, which is different from an employment licence.

Requests Extended Leave in Term Time

Before making a request for extended leave it is important to note that: as a parent you do not have an automatic right to take your children out of school during term time. (The school may refuse permission if it feels the absence is not justified or might be harmful to your child's education); children make best progress at school through regular and punctual attendance; children of compulsory school age have to attend school for 190 days per year (which leaves another 175 for weekends and holidays). School may apply for fixed penalty notice for unauthorised holidays in term time.

How to ask

You should not book leave until permission has been granted by the school. Requests for leave of absence should be submitted on the standard application form, which is available from the school. All sections of the form should be completed, with the date of your child's return to school clearly entered. Only then will the school be able to consider the request.

Removal from School Roll and Penalty Notices

If your child fails to return by the agreed date, school may refer the child to the Children Missing Education Officer with a view to removing your child from the school roll. If **there is a continued absence of 2 weeks (20 school sessions)** and depending on the circumstances of a late return, or a holiday taken without authorisation, it is possible that the Local Education Authority might issue a Penalty Notice.

PENALTY NOTICES

Introduction

From February 2004, the law gave powers to the Local Education Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the penalty means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

How are they issued?

Penalty Notices will always be issued by post to your home.

When are they issued?

Lancashire County Council considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Fixed

Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs, such as:

- truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);
- unauthorised leave in term time or excessive delayed return from leave without prior school permission;
- persistent late arrival at school.

In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of six school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term before a Penalty Notice is considered. The Authority never takes such action lightly, and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement action. However, school attendance is of such importance to all of us that the Authority will use these powers if it is felt that it can secure a child's schooling.

Is a warning given?

Yes, generally for truancy and persistent lateness you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued. This will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to bring about an improvement. In that time, your child should have no unauthorised absences from school. However, if you have taken your child on holiday without permission from school you may receive a penalty notice without the warning period.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning, you can make representations should you wish.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment **is not an option** with Penalty Notices.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period stated in the Penalty Notice, since payment of the penalty discharges your liability for that period. However, it could be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending on the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and other agencies such as Education Welfare.

What happens if I do not pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty in full, after which the Authority is required under the legislation to commence proceedings in the local Magistrates' Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. If proven, this can attract a range of sentences including fines up to £2,500 and/or up to three months' imprisonment. Other disposals such as Parenting Orders or Community Sentences can be imposed depending upon the circumstances. Costs may also be imposed.