

# **GOSBERTON HOUSE ACADEMY**

## **INCLUSION and ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Ethos**

Gosberton House Academy is committed to providing a full and engaging education for all of our children. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that may impede full attendance are acted upon as quickly as possible.

### **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body.

### **3. AIMS**

It is recognised that:

- \_ All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- \_ No pupils should be deprived of their opportunity to receive education that meets their needs and personal development.
- \_ In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- \_ Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- \_ Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in a partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

### **4. EXPECTATIONS**

We will invite parents/carers in to discuss any problems concerned with attendance, discreetly, perhaps by a telephone call or letter

If there is a Child Protection concern, then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedure will be followed immediately.

**We will work with families to ensure that :**

- \_ To ensure their children to attend school regularly.
- \_ To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- \_ To contact the school in confidence whenever any problems occur that may keep them away from school.

**Parents and children can expect the following from school:**

- \_ Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- \_ Early contact with parents when children fails to attend school without

providing good reason.

\_ Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.  
(Confidential means that the school will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the child or their parent).

\_ A quality education.

## **5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS.**

**Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:**

\_ Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and

\_ Attendance checks as part of staff meeting agendas

## **6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:**

**When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.**

\_ If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, the parents/carers will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone, by the School Office staff and each subsequent day as necessary.

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be contacted if thought appropriate, when continued non-attendance occurs without any adequate explanation.

**The Principal is to be informed of any absence which: -**

\_ Will be due to annual family holiday

\_ Appears irregular (generally below 90% depending on the individual and the complexity of their social/emotional / physical presentation ).

\_ Shows regular patterns, e.g. repeated absence on the same day/s of each week.

\_ Is unexplained, i.e. unauthorised.

The Principal will meet with the Education Welfare Office and raise any issues causing concern. Staff will have advance notice of any such meetings and should alert the Principal to any issues that may be concerning them.

Following referral of any matter to the EWS the school will take part fully in monitoring the situation and work fully with the relevant parties and agencies in the interest of the individual child.

### **Reintegration:**

\_ The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DCSF Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance.

(Circular 10/99).

- \_ The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
  - \_ All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
  - \_ Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate..
- The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the child and the parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees by the Principal

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## **7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils the importance and value of educations. In addition there may be specific responsibility allocated to individual staff - such as the following.

### **Principal:**

- \_ To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- \_ To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- \_ To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- \_ To liaise with EWO
- \_ To initiate contact with parents in cases of prolonged, unexplained absence.
- \_ To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- \_ In liaison with Office staff to produce the attendance profile for the whole school.

### **Class Teacher:**

- \_ To complete registers accurately and on time.
- \_ To follow up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting Office staff
- \_ To record all reasons for the absence in the electronic register.
- \_ To inform the Principal of any concerns they may have.

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### **Governors:**

\_ Request regular attendance progress will be reported via the Principal's Report to the Governing Board. [ at least three times per annum]

**Parents:**

- \_ Contact with school on first day of absence and subsequently as appropriate to update.
- \_ Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

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**Education Welfare Service:**

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves. In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures we can support schools in a variety of ways:

- \_ Liaise with the Principal and other identified school staff.
- \_ Where referral is accepted, undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- \_ Undertake Legal Proceedings on behalf of the LA where appropriate.
- \_ Accept referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria. And initiate contact with the parents or carers and undertake assessments.
- \_ Provide and review casework.
- \_ Provide feedback to schools.
- \_ Offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.
- \_ Support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- \_ Support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

**School Office Staff:**

School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the schools attendance and absence management strategies.

- \_ Collection of attendance data - notify staff via Integris and the whiteboard in the Hall [ for Taxi and Lunch purposes] .
- \_ Telephone parents about any absence and forward messages to teachers on reasons why children are absent.

**8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES.**

Research has shown that schools in partnerships with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or

disjointed. Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS it is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

**Other Agencies:** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- \_ Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- \_ Educational Psychologists.
- \_ Social Care.
- \_ Local Police.

**Data Protection Act:**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act.

Each school has a Data Protection Notification, which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the Police or Social Services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

**Review:**

The Principal and staff will review this policy annually, and present any suggested amendments or updates required to the next Governing Body Meeting.

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**APPENDIX 1**

**GUIDANCE FOR CLASS TEACHERS**

**SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities.....

**The importance of Registration: -**

- \_ An attendance register must be kept on which, at the **BEGINNING** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.
- \_ Authorised absences should be entered with the symbol for categorising the absence .
- \_ Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

\_ Attendance registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

**Categorising Absence: -**

**The school will use the categorisation as identified in the front of the register**

\_ **Only the school**, in the context of the law, **can authorise absence**, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Principal.

\_ Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Principal.

\_ Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.

**Authorised or Unauthorised Absence: -**

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

\_ Illness

\_ Family bereavements

\_ Family holiday (up to two weeks) but see notes below.

\_ Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.

\_ Days of religious observance.

\_ Fixed term exclusion.

\_ Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

**Family Holidays: -**

The school is able to exercise the discretion to grant parental requests.

Each request will be considered individually taking into account the specific needs of the child and family.

If a request is not granted and the parent takes the child on holiday, the absence should not be authorised. If a request is granted the absence should not normally be for more than two weeks in any school year. If the holiday goes on for longer than agreed, the extra day's absence should be unauthorised.

**The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in**

**Term Time: -**

As a general rule, the LA will not issue a penalty notice for unauthorised absence due solely to a holiday without permission. However, there may be circumstances where this sanction is appropriate. The EWS will work

with Principals to agree the most appropriate course of action for each individual case.

**Resolving Disagreements: -**

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the LA as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

**Approved Educational Activity: -**

Pupils who are absent from school but taking part in an approved Educational Activity should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for the absence returns to the DCSF. Visiting to see other schools is not an absence. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category: -

\_ Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should not be authorised under the following circumstances: -

\_ Shopping trips.

\_ Holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given.

\_ Minding the house or looking after siblings.

\_ Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.

\_ Medical appointments that cannot be verified.

\_ No reason given.

\_ School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Principal to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

**Lateness: -**

Children usually arrive via transport provided by LCC. In the event of persistent lateness, the Principal will liaise with LCC Transport Department. Families using their own transport will be supported to arrive on time.

**Removal from the school role: -**

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school role. These are detailed in Education (pupil registrations) Regulations

1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2).

Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal

\_ Where the school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.

\_ Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.

\_ Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school

\_ Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Principal of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of absence.

\_ Where the Principal has been notified that the pupil has died.

\_ Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class in the school.

\_ Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place, which is a reasonable distance from the school.

\_ If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.

\_ Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.

\_ Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

#### **Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date: -**

School will ensure, as far as possible, that the information we hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This helps to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4

of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

#### **Pupils who are missing: -**

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquires have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File will be completed and uploaded to the DCSF National Missing Pupils Database.

## **APPENDIX 2**

**GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS: -**

**How parents can help us: -**

- \_ Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- \_ Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- \_ Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that the child has slept, eaten, is clean and well prepared for the day ahead.
- \_ Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.

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