

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Rationale**

Chipping Sodbury School is committed to excellent attendance. Positive attendance plays a significant part in the key predictors of student performance in school. We work hard to ensure all students in our care attend full time education and support the improvement of students whose attendance causes concern. In particular, we endeavour to raise awareness of the impact of poor attendance on student attainment, amongst students, parents and staff.

### **Aims**

- To achieve excellent attendance.
- To meet the annual school attendance target.
- To reduce the number of unauthorised absences
- To reduce the number of persistent absent students i.e. those with under 90%.
- To reduce the number of unnecessary term time absences.
- To engage all students, parents and staff by raising awareness of their responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To monitor closely, trends and patterns of attendance in order to identify attendance concerns early on.
- Maintain awareness of attendance expectations through clear communication with students, parents and staff.
- Engage the support of the Education Welfare Service to support internal monitoring processes.
- To work in partnership with parents and other agencies (via the pre-SAF/SAF) to address any underlying causes/difficulties which are impacting on attendance.

### **General Guidelines**

- Attendance expectations are set out through the home – school agreement, staff handbook, school website link, the “attendance matters” leaflet and newsletter and other updates.
- Parents hold the responsibility to ensure their child arrives at school in good time.
- All students must be in their tutor base by 8.50am for registration. Gates will be closed at 8.50am promptly.
- Parents are required to inform the school of absence on the first day and each day of absence.
- Unexplained absences will be followed up on the first day when information has NOT been received from the parent.
- The automated ‘truancy call’ system will usually be the first method of contacting parents when absences remain unexplained. The first contact number on our system will be used, unless an alternative is requested by the parent.
- Period 4 will be used to record the PM registration requirements and students are required to be in the lesson by 1.15pm.
- Students arriving after 8.50am must sign in the late book via reception, before making their way to tutor / lesson time.
- Students arriving late for AM or PM registration are recorded as late – ‘L’. The number of minutes late must be recorded. If the reason for the lateness is not accounted for i.e. no parental contact or the bus was not late, we will send a “late text” to inform parents of their child’s tardiness.
- Students arriving late, after 9.30am and 1.30pm will be given a “U” code.
- Students who need to leave during the school day must complete the attendance book in reception after presenting a note from their parent/carer/s.
- Students are not permitted to leave the school site at lunch time without a lunch pass. Lunch passes will be issued via the Head of House on receipt of a lunch pass request form completed and signed by a parent.

## **Taking registers**

Electronic registers will be marked by tutors during registration and each period.

- It is essential that the correct codes are used when marking registers. (see attendance codes below)
- Do not override codes already entered.
- Paper backup registers will be stored centrally in the school office.

## **Attendance Codes**

- 'N' code used to record unknown absences.
- 'O' to be used for all unexplained absences after two week period.
- 'L' to be used for late during registration or up to 9.30am and 1.30pm
- 'U' to be used for late after registration has closed, after 9.30am or 1.30pm, or for students who are persistently late.

## **Term time request for absences**

- All requests for term time absence should be sought from the House Coordinator, Access Centre Manager or Showman traveller support worker and the request form returned at least two weeks before the requested date where possible.
- With effect from 1st September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers are no longer allowed to grant requests for holidays during term time and may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school is required by law to comply with this change to the regulations affecting all absence from school during term time after 1st September 2013. Accordingly the school will not authorise absence for term-time holidays and this type of absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## **Removing students from roll**

Students can only be removed from a school roll for the following reasons:

- The student is enrolled at a new school and the new school confirmed enrolment.
- The student has left the area and not been enrolled at another school. The student is a Child Missing Education 'CME'. The school should make enquiries about the whereabouts of the student and refer to the EWO if appropriate for a home visit. If it is clear that the student has left the area a referral needs to be made to Fran Bennett, the current CME Officer in South Gloucestershire
- The student is 'Electively Home Educated' (EHE) – a parent should make the request to home educate their child in writing, clearly saying that this is their wish. This letter should be passed onto the South Gloucestershire Council where home visits will be set up. The current EHE Officer in South Gloucestershire is Fran Bennett 01454 8633880. Fran's email address is [fran.bennett@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:fran.bennett@southglos.gov.uk)

## **Education Welfare Service Attendance Procedures**

- The attendance monitoring group will follow the procedure set out by the LA guidance.
- School attendance meetings are held if there is a concern about a student's absence. Any further concern could result in formal procedures involving the LA (appendix 3)
- A penalty notice may be used for Y11 students, if poor attendance persists and court proceedings are not deemed possible.
- Penalty fines will also be imposed when holiday is taken in term time and the pupil's unauthorised absence is 11 sessions (5.5 days) or more. This includes cases where, because of exceptional circumstances, up to 5 days absence has been authorised when it would not be

usual policy to do so. Any extension beyond the agreed time will render the whole period unauthorised. Penalty Fines for holidays are not preceded by attendance meetings.

- A penalty notice request may be made to the local authority for any student with unauthorised absence coded as “U”, “G” or “O” (appendix 1 & 2).

### **Continued medical absence**

- Continued medical absences must, where ever possible, be supported by some medical evidence. E.g. Appointment card, prescription, doctor’s note.

### **Monitoring**

- The Attendance Monitoring Group \*will meet each term to discuss attendance related issues and review data. (\*Assistant Head, House Cos, EWO, Attendance Clerk, governor representative with attendance responsibility)
- Regular meetings will take place between the Education Welfare Officer for the school and each House Co-ordinator. The Education Welfare Officer will also meet regularly with the Access Centre Manager.
- Concerns about student attendance will be dealt with by following a standard procedure (flow diagram attached)
- The Education Welfare Service will be involved when the school strategies to encourage attendance are not successful.
- EWS attendance procedures will be implemented in line with LA guidelines.
- Truancy sweeps of EWS and police personnel may take place periodically.
- Excellent and improved attendance will be recognised
- This policy will be monitored by the Governors’ School Committee who will also appoint a governor representative with attendance responsibility.

Committee: School

Approved: September 2015

Review date: September 2017

## THE CODES

/ \ Present

B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)

D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)

E Excluded (No alternative provision made)

F Extended Family Holiday (agreed)

G Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)

H Family Holiday (agreed)

I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)

J Interview

L Late (before registers closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)

P Approved sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave.

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registration closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

X Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils

Y Enforced closure

Z Pupil not on roll

# School closed to pupils

**South Gloucestershire Council Code of Conduct (Revised September 2013)**  
**Penalty Notices**  
**for unauthorised or irregular attendance at school or exclusion from school**

*The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2006*  
*As amended by The Education (Penalty Notice) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2012*  
*And The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2013*

### **Rationale and overview of Penalty Notices**

The purpose of this code of conduct is to ensure that Penalty Notices are applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that arrangements for their issue and administration are suitable.

A Penalty Notice (herein called the 'Notice') is a fine issued and administered solely by South Gloucestershire Education (Statutory) Service within the Education Learning and Skills Division behalf of the local authority. Head teachers (or nominated deputies) and the chief officer of police for the area may request a Notice to be issued by the local authority.

1. Any Notice issued must comply with the local code of conduct.
2. The amount of the penalty to be paid is :
  - a. £60 where the amount is paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice or
  - b. £120 where paragraph a) does not apply but where the amount is paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice.
3. Where the Notice is served by first class post, service is deemed to have been effected (unless the contrary is proved) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> working day after posting.
4. Payment is made to the local authority issuing the Notice. Revenue generated from the Notices will be used to cover the costs of issue and enforcement and the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay, any sums not used for this purpose will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.
5. Within this code of conduct 'parent' is as defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996.
6. A Notice is a method by which a parent may discharge potential liability for conviction of an offence either under:
  - a. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or
  - b. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
7. If the Notice is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it, the local authority will instigate a prosecution or else withdraw the Notice. Part payment will not be accepted.
8. A Notice may only be withdrawn in cases in which the authority determines the Notice:
  - a. ought not to have been issued
  - b. ought not to have been issued to the person named
  - c. contains material errors
9. A Notice may be issued to each parent of a child
10. A maximum of 2 Penalty Notices may be issued per parent, per child in a 12 month period

### **Unauthorised or Irregular attendance at school**

- a) A Notice is a method by which a parent may discharge potential liability for conviction of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- b) Notices may be issued in cases where more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence accumulate in a 7 week period (i.e. 70 possible sessions of attendance at school).

- c) In cases where pupils are not expected to be present for every morning and afternoon session (e.g. attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit), proportionality will be used to determine whether or not a Notice may be issued. This will be approximately equivalent to 85% attendance (or less) in a 7 week period where some or all of the absences are unauthorised.
- d) A warning letter that a Notice may be issued should be sent, giving parents 15 days to effect an improvement.
- e) In circumstances of unauthorised holidays in term time it is expected that schools will have made every effort to warn their parents that they may receive a Penalty Notice if the holiday is taken without authorisation. No letter of warning giving parents 15 days to effect an improvement is required in these circumstances.
- f) Schools must regularly ensure that information regarding unauthorised absence from school and Penalty Notices is available to parents.

## **Exclusion from school**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents in relation to an excluded pupil. A parent must ensure that their child is not present in a public place during normal school hours without reasonable justification for any of the first 5 days of each and every fixed term and permanent exclusion. If a parent fails in this duty, a Penalty Notice may be issued. Section 104 of the Act requires schools to notify parents in writing that they are responsible for the child during these specified days.

- i. A Notice is a method by which a parent may discharge potential liability for conviction of an offence under Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- ii. School hours are defined as 'a school session or the break between sessions on the same school day'
- iii. A public place means a highway or any other public place to which the public has access. A school is not a public place for this purpose.
- iv. Reasonable justification may include medical emergencies and hospital or other medical appointments. Shopping for clothes or food would not generally be considered reasonable. It is the parent's responsibility to prove reasonable justification.
- v. Parents will be given the opportunity to provide reasonable justification prior to the issue of a Notice.
- vi. Information will be collected by the Local Authority in order to establish whether or not an offence has been committed.
- vii. If the Notice is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it, the local authority will instigate prosecution or else withdraw the Notice.

A Notice should not generally be issued for a first offence, a parent should receive a warning that a Notice may be issued if the pupil is found on a second or subsequent occasions. An exception to this may be that the parent is particularly blameworthy or their attitude to the offence is negligent.

Administration for the Penalty Notice is co-ordinated by the Education (Statutory) Service within the Education Learning and Skills Division.

This code of conduct has been drawn up in line with The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the original Code was drawn up in consultation with Headteachers, Governors and the police, this version is to reflect a statutory amendment and therefore further consultation was not required.

**South Gloucestershire Council Code of Conduct (Revised September 2013)  
Penalty Notices  
for unauthorised or irregular attendance at school or exclusion from school**

*The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013*

**Guidance for Schools**

Penalty Notices may be requested by the Head Teachers of all local authority maintained schools and academies in South Gloucestershire and will be issued and administered by South Gloucestershire Council. They may be issued to one or both parents/carers regarding each of their children if more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence accumulate in a 7 week period (i.e. 70 sessions of possible attendance at school). A session is a morning or an afternoon. Any person with day to day care of the child may be issued with a Notice; this could include grandparents, step-parents and partners.

It is important to note that it is the Head Teacher's responsibility to decide whether or not to authorise an absence. Absence must be accurately recorded and it is an offence not to maintain accurate registers.

Schools must regularly ensure that information regarding unauthorised absence from school and Penalty Notices is available to parents and it should be contained in relevant policies (eg Attendance policy) student planners, newsletters, open day and new starter information packs.

Other than for holidays in term time, the decision regarding the issue of a Penalty Notice will be taken as part of the legal process between the school and local authority (ie at Attendance Panels and Reviews).

The following are examples when Penalty Notices are most likely to be issued:

1. For holidays taken in term time (G code):
2. For lateness after the register has closed (U code)
3. For afternoon absences eg where pupils have left the school site and not returned for afternoon registration
4. During Year 11
5. Occasional absences not authorised by the school

More serious absence will generally be dealt with via a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or by application for an Education Supervision Order.

**1. Holidays taken in term time**

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The local authority strongly urges parents not to take their children out of school for family holidays. Under the new regulations a Head Teacher can agree to a holiday in term time only where there are `exceptional circumstances.` No holiday should be agreed unless the Head Teacher is satisfied that there are such exceptional circumstances .

When a holiday is taken and the school has not authorised the absence, the school may request that the LA issues a Penalty Notice. Before requesting this, the school must ensure that, as far as possible,

the parent was aware that this may occur. Requests for Notices should be made by the school and signed by the Head Teacher or nominated Deputy as soon as possible after the holiday is taken. This should be no longer than 15 school days following the pupil's return. Although parents will have been warned that a Notice may be issued if they chose to continue with the holiday, no caveat regarding 15 days to effect an improvement will be given. If a school has grounds for suspecting a holiday has been taken without a request being received and they have recorded the absence as unauthorised, a Notice may be issued.

## **2. Lateness after the register has closed**

Schools must have a clear policy about the time that the registers will close. DFE guidance suggests that this should be approximately 30 minutes after the start of the day but schools may vary this. Parents will normally have been invited to school for a meeting to discuss lateness and an action plan agreed. Parents should be issued with a warning to effect an improvement prior to the receipt of a Notice.

## **3. Absence in the afternoons**

Parents will normally have been invited to school for a meeting to discuss absence and an action plan agreed. Parents should be issued with a warning to effect an improvement prior to the receipt of a Notice.

## **4. During Year 11**

If poor attendance was prevalent in Year 10 and a School Attendance Meeting has taken place prior to the pupil starting year 11, Attendance Panels and Reviews should be pursued during terms 1 to 2. If attendance deteriorates during terms 1 – 4, with no prior meetings, action should still be taken to try and address the issues. A Penalty Notice should be considered if the situation does not improve. Parents should be issued with a warning prior to the receipt of a Notice.

## **5. General Non-School attendance. Repeated absences**

All unauthorised absence should be addressed by the school with the parent. Schools should request a meeting with parents where there are a high number of 'broken weeks'\*. A request for a Penalty Notice Warning letter may be made in exceptional circumstances where school attendance is a concern and where it is felt to be more appropriate than a prosecution. (Note: Non-payment of a Penalty Notice may still result in prosecution. Section 444 1996 Education Act )

\*Broken weeks – incomplete weeks with one or more absence.

### **Penalty Notices cannot be issued:**

- If the request does not comply with the South Gloucestershire code of conduct
- if the child is not of statutory school age
- if there are 10 sessions or less of unauthorised absence in a 7 week period (70 sessions)
- if the child is in the care of the local authority (unless the pupil is still living at home)
- if there is no evidence that the school made the parents aware that a Notice may be issued

## **1. Penalty Notice relating to exclusion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 103, places a duty on parents in relation to an excluded child.

Penalty Notices relating to exclusion became a new power available to local authorities from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. A parent must ensure their child is not present in a public place\* during school hours\*\* without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of each and every exclusion from school. These days are known as 'specified days of exclusion'

\* *Public place means any highway or any place to which the public has access (a school is not a public place for this purpose)*

\*\* *school hours is defined as 'a school session or a break between sessions on the same school day'*



A Penalty Notice is a fine issued by the [Quality Assurance Senior Advisor](#) on behalf of the local authority and administered by the Department for Children Adults and Health.

## **2. The Introduction of Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices are amongst the interventions available to promote better behaviour and attendance. Good behaviour and regular attendance at school are essential to improve a child's educational prospects and to avoid putting them at risk of criminal and anti-social behaviour.

## **3. The Meaning of 'reasonable justification'**

The local authority will carefully consider reasons given by the parent if a child is found in a public, prior to issuing a Penalty Notice. A medical emergency, hospital appointments and other medical appointments may be considered reasonable but a pupil found shopping is unlikely to be.

## **4. Fines Payable**

The fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice; rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice.

## **5. No Right Of Appeal**

There is no right of appeal against the Penalty Notice but if you believe it to be wrongly issued you should immediately contact:

The Senior Education Officer (Penalty Notices)  
South Gloucestershire Council  
Department for Children, Adults & Health  
Education, Learning and Skills Division  
PO Box 2083  
Council Offices  
Castle Street  
Thornbury  
Bristol BS35 9BR

## **6. Failure to pay (Penalty Notice for Exclusion)**

If a parent/carer has not paid the Penalty Notice in full before the 28 days allowed, the local authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure a child is not in a public place during the 'specified days of exclusion'.

If found guilty under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act, the parent carer could receive a fine of up to £1,000

## **7. Failure to pay (Penalty Notice for School Absence)**

If a parent/carer has not paid the Penalty Notice in full before the 28 days allowed, the local authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure a child attends school.

If found guilty under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, the parent/carer could receive a fine of up to £1,000 or other sentencing options available to the court.



**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The school recognises and embraces the cultural heritage of the showman families. In order to accommodate the unique lifestyle of showman families and to support them to ensure children from these families achieve the best educational outcomes the school has consulted with these families and the LA to establish the following:

- Attendance for children from showman family's needs to be at least 200 sessions in a 12 month period.