

'This policy has been reviewed and no individual or group in the school community is disadvantaged by the policy and processes.'

## Attendance Policy

	Name of School	Gidea Park Primary School
	Policy review Date	November 2015
	Date of next Review	November 2019
	Who reviewed this policy?	Susan Rudge

Gidea Park Primary is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children as we can only teach children when they are in school. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education following the LA guidance (Appendix 1.1)

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Local attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. The head teacher or a member of staff acting on his/her behalf will authorise absence as appropriate. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. A range of support for parents will be made available where they (the parent/s) are seeking the schools assistance to encourage a child to attend school more regularly. This school will not ask children to remain at home, other than those that are formally fixed term or permanently excluded, unless there is a serious risk to the child in question or other children in the school in the case of sickness. In this case this school will seek advice from the LA to establish a way forward.

### **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50am. The registers will remain open until 9.30. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment and where an appointment card is provided, the appropriate authorized absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.10 for infants and 1.20 PM. for juniors.  
The registers will close at 1.30 PM for infants and 1.40 for juniors

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

### **First Day Absence**

We have adopted first day calling as part of our attendance policy. When a child is absent a call is made to the parent/carer asking for an explanation. If no explanation is received by 10am the absence will be marked as unauthorised until an acceptable reason is given. If an acceptable explanation is received the absence will be marked accordingly. First Day Absence calling will be undertaken by a member of staff and may include contact through the Groupcall text system.

### **Unexplained Absence**

If pupils are absent without adequate explanation a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. This action does not preclude the school taking all the necessary steps to ensure that the child/children is/are safe. Details of any of the action taken by the school will be submitted to the Education Welfare Officer/Service in order that they are fully equipped with the necessary information. Unexplained absences and/or frequent absences can be a serious cause for concern and therefore in terms of the Safeguarding of Children and Young People, any unexplained absences will be a priority for this school.

### **Frequent Absence**

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be medical. In other cases the school will liaise with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). A range of professional staff may need to be alerted to the attendance concerns for a particular child, i.e. a child that has a statement of special need.

## **Welcome Back**

Where there is a valid reason for absence, pupils are made to feel welcome upon return. For example the pupil will be helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Various methods will be adopted by the school to enable the child to settle back into school as quickly as possible.

## **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. Notes may be submitted to the EWO if the Officer for the school is involved in the attendance issues for the particular child in question.

## **Promoting attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. The Home/School agreement may be used in this way.

## **Pupil Leave of Absence for a Family Holiday and Extended Leave.**

Gidea Park takes a very firm view on such absences which will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. In partnership with the LA, the Governing Body and Headteacher of this school have determined that they will adopt the borough guidance relating to this issue and that 5 days of unauthorised absence over a school year is likely to lead to a penalty fine being imposed by our Education Welfare Officer. Parents of children on the roll of this school will be notified of the likely penalty they will each face if their request is refused and they still take the child out of school. The school will require you to complete a form requesting leave of absence, which the school will provide upon request or can be downloaded from the school website as Appendix 1.2 to this policy.

## **Attendance Awards**

In order to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance, special certificates will be given in whole school assembly. Those children with 100% attendance for a term will be presented with a certificate signed by the headteacher. Full attendance for 2 terms will be rewarded with a pencil and those that have attended 100% for the entire year will be invited to a special tea party with the Headteacher at the end of the academic year.

## **Register Reviews**

The Local Authority have a duty to regularly check the schools registers for accuracy and to check that the correct codes are used for recording absences and approved educational activities.

The register reviews are undertaken by the schools EWO as part of their role in improving attendance and this school will ensure that the registers are available upon request for this audit. The information provided by the register review will inform this school of any issues that need addressing.

Any concerns with the registers will be discussed with the head teacher by the EWO.

## **Working Together with the LA**

LA Officers have responsibility for ensuring that any decisions regarding legal intervention are progressed appropriately. In order that the LA can exercise their duty, our school staff will co-operate where required. A range of interventions are available for LA Officers, some of which involves the courts involvement. Where an EWO is taking a parent/parents to the Magistrates Court this school will provide all the necessary information in the form of 'Certified Extracts' of the register which will be required to be signed by the Headteacher in advance of the hearing. Intervention may require school staff to attend planning meetings which will be arranged by the LA, and this school is fully committed to co-operating with all of these procedures.

- Formal Cautioning – this may include the need for a Headteacher or Senior Member of Staff to be in attendance.
- Penalty Notices (see Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices) This school will consider any consultation that the LA implement in respect of Penalty Notices.
- Education Supervision Orders - this school will provide reports and other appropriate information to support the process of an ESO as instigated by the LA
- School Attendance Order Notices – this school will work with LA Officers where a SAO Notice is considered to be appropriate.

## **Persistence Absence**

We are committed to ensuring that any occurrences of low attendance levels where children may be attending at less than 90% would be prioritised. These cases are monitored by the Education Welfare Officer on each visit.

## **Attendance Reviews**

The Governing Body of Gidea Park are fully committed to working closely with the LA and therefore welcome the opportunity of meeting with LA staff to discuss the status of the schools attendance. Governors would welcome LA staff attending Full Governing Body Meetings where attendance matters are reviewed.



## Policy Statement from the LA.

Parental Request for Leave of Absence for their child/children during term time.

**The LA would expect the Head Teacher of a school or Teacher in Charge of a Pupil Referral Unit NOT to authorise requests for family holidays and leave of absence in term time. The rationale for this expectation is that:**

Absence during term time is potentially detrimental to the education of children and young people.

Leave of absence is NOT an entitlement.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body of a Havering School or Teacher in Charge of a Pupil Referral Unit should therefore determine that, NO requests for leave of absence will be authorised.

If the circumstances of a parental request are **so** exceptional that the Head Teacher or Teacher in Charge, determines that the request be allowed, the parent will be required to give an expected return date. Exceptional circumstances are rare and will be determined at the discretion of the Head Teacher or Teacher in Charge, who will consult with the LA Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school or pupil referral unit.

If the parent/s of a child/young person takes leave of absence either without seeking permission or where permission has been sought and not agreed, they will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice which will be issued by the Education Welfare Service in line with the Havering Code of Conduct (FPN). This will also apply where under an exceptional circumstance the leave of absence has been agreed and the child/young person has failed to return on the agreed date. If the FPN is not paid within the time frame, the LA are obliged to take the matter before the Magistrates, for the offence, as outlined within the Code of Conduct.



## REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO BE ABSENT IN TERM TIME

As a Parent/Carer you will understand that regular attendance at school is necessary for your child/children to make good progress with their education. Following the implementation of new regulations from September 2013, schools cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they deem it to be an exceptional circumstance.

We define the term 'exceptional' as an occasion that cannot be planned for, so we are afraid that anything that can be planned, such as all family holidays, weddings, family birthday parties or surprise trips organised by relatives cannot be authorised.

If you believe that your situation may be considered 'exceptional', please fill out the leave of absence request form overleaf. It is important that you provide as much evidence as possible with your application so that the panel of Governors, including the headteacher, have the full facts available to them to consider your request. We will still need to take into account your child's attendance against the school's attendance target of 96%.

The DfE guidance is available regarding absence in term time is available on the school website, in the 'Policies' section or can be found via the DfE website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

**If the absence is not authorised, and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Caution note or a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child that is taken out of school.**



**REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO BE ABSENT IN TERM TIME**

I wish my child/children ..... Class/s .....

to be absent from attending school during term time for the following dates:

From:..... To .....

The number of school days to be missed is..... and they will be returning to school on .....

***Please give the full reason for asking for leave of absence in term time.***

..... Signature of Parent/Carer

Date .....

For office use: Attendance % this academic year .....