



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Introduction and Aim of Policy

Glenthorne High School aims to raise the achievement of all its pupils and to ensure that all pupils can thrive, feel safe, enjoy their education and are prepared for their future. The school recognises that attendance is a critical factor in pupil success. It therefore aims to achieve exceptionally high attendance levels for all pupils so they can thrive and succeed.

This policy takes into account the following Government documents:

- Working together to improve school attendance, May 2022  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance, Sept 2022  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073619/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance  
[Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)

### Objectives

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at the school. The school recognises that progress is severely hampered if they do not attend school.
- To create an environment in which pupils look forward to attending school and lessons
- To make attendance a priority for pupils, parents, staff and governors
- To create a framework which defines roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To create a rigorous system for monitoring and analysing attendance across the school
- To provide support and advice to parents
- To recognise the needs of individual pupils when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence
- To ensure that attendance data is accurate and regularly generated so that:
  - Pupils can be praised/rewarded for their attendance
  - Parents/carers can be quickly informed of any attendance and punctuality issues
  - Individual pupils and groups can be monitored
  - Targets for individual pupils, groups of pupils and the school can be set and regularly reviewed

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governors will:

- Set targets for attendance and monitor progress towards meeting these targets
- Ensure implementation of this policy

The Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Behaviour and Attitudes, Duncan Gillies (dgi@glenthorne.sutton.sch.uk) will take overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy by:

- Developing and monitoring policies that create an environment in which all pupils feel valued and safe and in which they are encouraged and able to achieve success
- Agreeing targets with the Governors and report on progress

The Assistant Head Teacher in charge of attendance will ensure the implementation of the policy by:

- Giving attendance a high profile with pupils, staff and parents/carers
- Identifying clear roles and responsibilities and ensuring that staff have the time and resources to fulfil them
- Ensuring that there is sufficient funding to support reward systems
- Ensure that procedures are followed across all Year Groups through oversight of work carried out by Heads of Year
- Oversee the Heads of Year to ensure that attendance is regularly discussed in year group assemblies and that pupils with high levels of and/or improved attendance are praised and rewarded regularly
- Liaise weekly with the Attendance Officer and Welfare and Attendance Officer to ensure that pupils with low attendance are routinely identified and that appropriate action is being taken by the Head of Year or Attendance and welfare officer

The Heads of Year will:

- Ensure that attendance has a high profile within their year group.
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality procedures are followed across their year group
- Monitor for internal truancy. Look for patterns of absence and consider the impact of the curriculum upon attendance alongside other causes
- Ensure that pupils on long term absence/exclusion access the curriculum and are supported on their return
- Liaise weekly with the Attendance Officer, Welfare and Attendance Officer, tutors and SENDCo to ensure procedures are being followed for pupils with continued low attendance
- Assist the attendance officer where appropriate in meetings with parents and pupils within their year whose attendance is low and/or below 93% and/or where there is regular unauthorised absence within a 6 week period
- Ensure that attendance is regularly discussed in Year Group Assemblies and that pupils with high levels of and/or improved attendance are praised and rewarded regularly
- Act on the attendance data to ensure that pupils with low attendance are detected early and appropriate action is taken.
- Be aware of school priorities with regard to attendance, persistent absence and punctuality, and plan interventions to secure improvements for targeted groups
- Ensure that tutors make contact with families and record and pass on information to relevant staff.

- Direct tutors to make subsequent contact for pupils with repeated absences.
- Be role models in terms of attendance

#### Heads of House will:

- Ensure that attendance has a high profile within their House
- Act on the attendance data to ensure that pupils with low attendance are directed to attendance club
- Be aware of school priorities with regard to attendance, persistent absence and punctuality, and plan interventions to secure improvements for targeted groups
- Liaise with Heads of Year to ensure pupils attend attendance clubs
- Make contact with families and record and pass on information to relevant staff.
- Make subsequent contact for pupils with repeated absences.
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

#### The SENDCO will:

- Support the school in giving attendance a high profile
- Support the Heads of Year to ensure that procedures are followed in their year groups by offering advice as appropriate
- Ensure that pupils with SEND on long term absence/exclusion are supported on their return
- Liaise with external and internal agencies to ensure that SEND pupils and parents/carers are given relevant support to improve their attendance, as directed by the Deputy Head Teacher
- Attend meetings for pupils with Education Health Care Plan as requested by the Deputy Head Teacher

#### Form Tutors will:

- Support the school in giving attendance a high profile
- Ensure that the register is taken daily at the correct time, using the correct codes
- Monitor early indicators of school avoidance and inform Heads of Year
- Liaise closely with their Head of Year and the Attendance Officer with regards to attendance issues
- Ensure that pupils who have been absent from the school are made to feel welcome on their return.
- Contact parents with concerns regarding attendance and the impact on attainment, as directed by their Head of Year
- Ensure that issues of bullying, difficulties with work/peers/travel etc. are dealt with effectively and that relevant staff are informed
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

#### Subject Teachers will:

- Support the school in giving attendance a high profile
- Ensure that the register is taken daily at the start of each lesson
- Notify on-call if a pupil is absent from their lesson when the register is taken

- Contact parents if attendance is having an impact on attainment in their subject, as directed by a Subject Leader
- Ensure that pupils who have been absent from the school are made to feel welcome on their return.
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor pupils attendance each day
- Make contact with parent/carers of pupils with unexplained absence on the day of absence
- Mark the pupil register with the appropriate code and forward information as necessary
- Inform the DSL of any pupils where there are significant concerns by 9.30am
- Meet with Heads of Year on a weekly basis
- Send appropriate letters to parent/carers of pupils to update them on the child's attendance
- Liaise with the Welfare and Attendance Officer and Head of Year regarding making home visits
- Attend fortnightly meetings with the Deputy Head Teacher responsible for attendance.
- Monitor the attendance register, alerting the relevant staff when concerns arise.
- Will make contact with parents of any child absent on the First Contact list at the very start of the day

The Welfare and Attendance Officer will:

- Assist the Deputy Head Teacher and Attendance Officer to ensure attendance is high profile within the School
- Monitor and produce weekly reports on attendance
- Lead parental meetings for pupils with less than 90% attendance
- Provide data to SLT and external agencies, as required for the census etc.
- Correspond with parents where attendance is a concern
- Submit paperwork for Fixed Penalty Notices and/or legal action to the Local Authority
- Undertake home visits where deemed necessary

Pupils will:

- Arrive on site before the first bell, correctly dressed in uniform
- Attend lessons and tutor time on time
- Sign in at the pupil office if they are late for school
- Be prepared to make up missed work and ask for help if this is required
- Stay on site during the school day
- Sign out at pupil office if they have to attend an appointment (evidence must be provided)

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure pupils attend school
- If a pupil is going to be absent from school due to sickness or a medical appointment, parents must inform the school using **only** using the school absence line via the school switchboard (option 2) by 8.25am, before the start of the school day. Parents should contact the school through the above method each day the pupil is going to be absent

including where absence is on consecutive days. The Attendance Officer will process all absence as soon as possible each morning.

- Encourage pupils to leave home in plenty of time in the mornings
- Ensure that they are in the correct school uniform
- Inform the school if a pupil is unwell or going to be late through the school absence line (above). Give an indication as to when the pupil will be well enough to return.
- Provide medical evidence in support of any absences when the pupil has attendance of less than 93%
- Make routine medical/dental appointments out of school time
- Arrange for holidays to be taken out of term time.
- Attend any meetings requested by the Attendance Officer or the Welfare and Attendance Officer

## **Unexplained and Continuous Absence**

### **1st Day of Absence**

All pupils not seen at registration should be marked as an unexplained (N) absence. A text will also be sent requesting explanation for the absence. The Attendance Officer will phone home on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received and there has been no response to our absence text. An absence text will be sent on each day of absence if reason for absence is not provided and there is no contact from the family.

### **3rd Day of Continuous Absence**

If no contact with family is made to obtain a reason for absence on the third day of absence, the school will call all contacts listed on SIMs to raise concern and obtain information of pupil whereabouts.

### **5th Day of Continuous Absence**

If no contact with the family has been made for 5 consecutive days and no further information has been received, a home visit will be undertaken by the Welfare and Attendance Officer and a referral to CFCS will be considered

### **10th Day of Continuous Absence**

If the pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive days and no update provided to school in all the steps above the child will be referred to 'Children Missing in Education' to Sutton Local Authority.

For children where there are concerns regarding wellbeing or welfare, or for children who are subject to any safeguarding plan, we may conduct a home visit at any time to ensure that the child remains safe.

### **Children Missing Education**

The school follows Sutton LA's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (CME). In line with these processes and following the statutory guidance set out in DFE 2016 we are in regular contact with the LA and provide them with information on changes to the roll as required. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval.

In line with practices agreed with the LA and the guidance first set out in DFE-00261-2016 'Children Missing Education' (September 2016), the Attendance Officer will inform the Attendance Service at Sutton LSCP of any pupil who has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days to report the pupil as missing from education. In addition, the attendance officer will inform the school's Designated Safeguard Lead. The DSL will then make an assessment of the child's vulnerability and, where appropriate, a CFCS referral to social care for that child will be made

## **Penalty Notices**

As set out in 'Working Together to Improve Attendance' if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, it is not the school, but the local authority that can prosecute parents and they will fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

The school will refer pupils to the local authority where continuous absence affects a pupil's overall attendance. The Attendance and Welfare Officer will refer pupils when attendance falls below 85% (with 6 or more of the absences being recorded as unauthorised for any 6-week period) or there is persistent absence (see below). This could result in parent(s)/carer(s) being issued with a Penalty Notice and further legal action.

## **Intermittent Absence**

It is also recognised by the school that pupils will on occasions be ill but expects pupils to be in good health and regularly attending the school.

For this reason, a number of measures are taken to minimise intermittent, short-term absences.

- Text messages are made daily to inform parents of their child's absence and request information to support it
- Phone calls made by tutors to encourage maximum attendance
- All reports contain attendance percentage to update parents and carers on their child's attendance record
- Rewards for attendance including:
  - Postcards home
  - Year group rewards
  - Tutor group rewards
  - Most improved breakfasts
  - End of terms rewards
  - Announcements in Whole School and Year Group assemblies
- Bespoke programmes led by the Heads of House to tackle attendance issues with individuals

Letters will be sent out to the parents of all pupils where attendance has been identified as below 93%

In occasional circumstances it may be deemed appropriate to not send out the letters outlined above although we expect the instances in which this to be the case to be minimal.

### **Persistent Absence**

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.' (Education Act 1996). From September 2015, Persistent absence has been defined by the Department for Education as all attendance falling below 90%.

Penalty Notices, issued by Sutton Local Authority, will be sent to each parent/carer of pupil/s at the school who meet the criteria for a warning to be issued as a result of low attendance percentage within an academic year. The parent/carer will be sent warning letters stating the reason for the warning being issued. If there is no sustained improvement and there are 10 unauthorised absences within a 6 week period details will be forwarded to the Attendance Service at Sutton Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for the Penalty Notice to be issued. If there has been an improvement, the parent/carer will be informed.

### **Severe Absence**

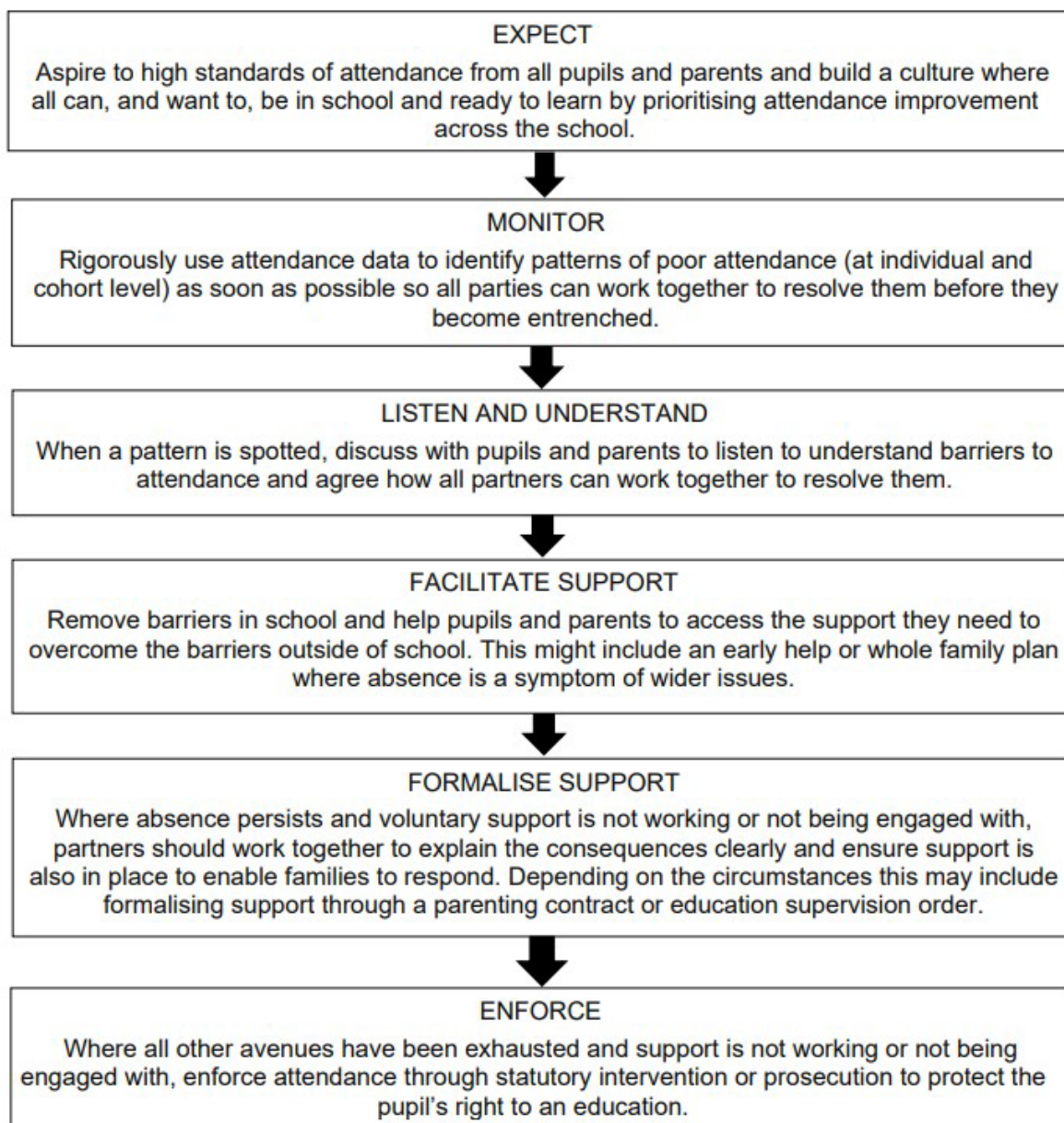
Severe absence is classified as those pupils missing 50% or more of school (Working together to improve attendance, 2022). A concerted effort will be made by all partners to prioritise support for these pupils in order to improve their attendance.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by school, local authorities and other appropriate education support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reason continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and be referred to Sutton's social care.

### **Working TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

In order to improve attendance, we aim to work with external partners and families in order to treat the root cause of poor attendance. We will analyse attendance data and implement the following as set out in the 'working together to improve school attendance' (2022):





## **Ongoing Health Needs**

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have a special educational need or disability. The right to education is the same for all pupils and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as for other pupils.

Where a pupil displays any social, emotional or mental health issue which affects their attendance the school will work to ensure regular attendance. The school maintains high expectations for the attendance, engagement and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school. It is important to recognise that, in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as much as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten their anxiety about attending in future. The school will work quickly to communicate this expectation to parent/carers and work together with them to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance. Any associated anxiety about attending should be mitigated as much as possible by introducing an attendance agreement to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance. These adjustments will be documented in an attendance agreement and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers and will seek to maximise face-to-face attendance in school. If attendance is affected by a mental health condition, the school will where appropriate hold a meeting with parents/pupils/HOY/ Welfare and Attendance Officer to create an attendance agreement with 'reasonable adjustments' related to the child's barriers to attendance. This should be reviewed regularly.

Parents have a duty, under 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full-time education either by good attendance at school or otherwise, and so share in the responsibility of ensuring good and regular attendance in all circumstances. As such the school will work together with parents and pupils to reduce anxiety in relation to attendance through using an attendance agreement to overcome barriers and build confidence and reduce anxiety about attending.

Any reasonable adjustments or support put in place by school should ensure that the time the child spends in school is prioritised as much as is possible. Where support offered is not engaged with, or where all other options have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate, the school will pursue the legal process and work with Sutton LA to consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under their existing powers.

It is important that children and parents/carers do not feel as though their concerns about mental health have gone unheard which is why the school will record absences as authorised where pupils of compulsory school age cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). The school will not routinely ask for medical evidence to support recording an absence as authorised for mental health reasons. However, in instances of long-term or repeated absences for the same reason the school will seek medical evidence to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods.

In very exceptional circumstances, however, where it is in a pupil's best interests, a plan to help a child to attend with time orientated targets and well involve the use of a temporary

part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Any part-time timetable arrangements will be designed with the specific barrier to attendance in mind, have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time. The school will meet with parents/carers and pupils to review any such formal arrangements. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school, parents/carers and pupil have agreed to the pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as 'absence with leave' (a type of authorised absence). The school will inform the LA through either VPP, Attendance Panel or the Sutton AST team where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days, and work with the family to provide educational provision whilst determining with the LA whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

The school will take forward attendance prosecution where all other options have been exhausted and deemed inappropriate. If in-school pastoral and/or external specialist support is facilitated but not engaged with voluntarily, the school will work with LA AST to consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under their existing powers. This includes instances where a mental health issue is affecting attendance.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will ensure all opportunities are utilised to promote and celebrate attendance.

These will include, but will not be limited to:

- Striving to make the school a welcoming and caring environment
- Rewards
- Assemblies
  - Attendance Clubs
  - Using parents evenings to celebrate good attendance and raise any concerns
  - Including attendance in reports sent to parents

### **Vulnerable Pupils**

In addition to the steps taken for all pupils in line with this policy:

- For looked after children, attendance is shared with DSL on a daily basis.
- The Attendance and Welfare Officer liaises with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis and is informed of any absences of pupils on a CP plan; action taken as required.
- The school maintains a vulnerable pupils list.
- Heads of Year have regular meetings with the Attendance Officer and discuss pupils who have been absent. They will cross-reference this information against the vulnerable list and their knowledge of current CP cases in their year group
- Heads of Year have regular meetings with their tutor teams. This enables them to communicate concerns about vulnerabilities and to gather information about any concerns. They will ensure at this meeting those tutors make contact as appropriate and in particular where pupils are vulnerable.
- Heads of Year and all staff have been made aware of specific risks such as forced marriage and FGM and are alert to these issues when analysing attendance data.

### **Pupils at Off-site Provision**

- The Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Alternative Provision has oversight of these pupils.
- All pupils attending off-site provision do so at institutions that have school status in their own right.
- In line with LEA guidance, these pupils are marked with a 'D' code for dual registration or with a 'B' code when educated off site.
- Attendance of all pupils on Alternative Provision is tracked regularly. Records are relayed from each provider to the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis for those pupils B coded on the school register.
- This attendance data is interrogated fortnightly to identify any safeguarding concerns or CME; where appropriate our DSL will liaise with the off-site provision and make referrals to CFCS etc. where thresholds are met.
- The school holds a copy of each provider's safeguarding statement and require all providers to make interventions where pupils are absent.
- If a child is deemed medically unfit to attend mainstream education and is referred to a Medical PRU (such as STARS in Sutton or the Lavender Centre in Merton), then the child will remain on roll, but their attendance marked with a D code as they are unable to attend in line with DfE guidance. Their attendance to the assigned provision will be monitored on a half-termly basis.

### **Procedures for Pupils Removed from School Roll**

- Any deletions from the admissions register will be done with reference to regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Pupils removed from the school roll are dealt with on a case-by case basis depending on the reason.
- The school Admissions Manager holds a file of evidence to show process for each pupil.
- Records held include details of school transfers, records to show that parents have taken responsibility for their child's education, evidence that families have moved out of the area, records of liaison with Attendance and Welfare Officer etc.
- The school Admissions Manager maintains a list of pupils taken off roll. This is held centrally and circulated to all staff for information on a half-termly basis.
- The school must notify the Local Authority on the day the pupil is removed from roll (using the pre-arranged process for this)

### **Absence and Exceptional Leave Policy**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school is clear that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a pupil's education and overall achievement. The Head teacher's decision on what is exceptional will be final

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, the Head Teacher will then consider the application. A letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to the applying parent/carer within 7 days.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Sutton. The Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 60 days or £120 thereafter, per parent per child. It is worth noting that a warning notice of the impending charge will not be provided to the parent / carer.

### **Punctuality**

The school recognises that poor pupil punctuality has a negative impact on achievement and can also disrupt the learning of other pupils. Lateness after the register is closed in the morning also contributes to a pupil's absence figures and, where accompanied by poor attendance, will contribute towards a pupil meeting the threshold for a Fixed Penalty Notice. This detention will take place on the same day. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities or caring responsibilities at the discretion of the Head Teacher

Pupils are considered to be late to school if they arrive at school after the main gate closes at 8.25am. As a result, pupils are expected to be onsite at 8.25am.

Where the lateness of a particular pupil is a particular problem, the attendance officer will review with the Head of Year, and as appropriate, the following may be applied

- Lunch detentions being issued
- Warning letter sent home
- Punctuality report
- Meeting arranged with Head of Year and parents/carers
- Meeting arranged with the Deputy Head Teacher and parents/carers