



Glynwood Community Primary School

Growing Together at Glynwood

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you and your families have had a lovely summer, and a very warm welcome to our first newsletter of the new school year.

On a personal note, it is particularly special for me to be writing to you again following my absence from school. I am very grateful for the kindness, understanding and good wishes that have been shown to me and my family during this time as well as Mr. Otterson and the rest of the staff team for keeping school running smoothly in my absence.

It is wonderful to be back with our school community and, most importantly, back amongst the children. There is something very special about the beginning of a new school year – seeing familiar faces returning a little taller and more grown-up, alongside lots of new faces beginning their journey with us. I am really looking forward to the year ahead.

A very warm welcome to our new families

We are delighted to welcome all of the new children and families who have joined us in Nursery and Reception this term.

The children have been absolutely wonderful and have settled into school life really well. Starting Nursery or Reception is such a big milestone for children (and often for their families too!), and we have been so proud of the confidence, enthusiasm and resilience they have already shown.

We hope that all of our new families will very quickly feel part of our school community. Please never hesitate to speak to us if you have any questions or need a little support as everyone settles in.

Safeguarding

Keeping our children safe is always our highest priority.

As we begin the new school year, I would like to remind families of our school's **Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)**. You will find our safeguarding poster at the bottom of this newsletter, showing the members of staff you can speak to if you ever have a safeguarding concern.

Please remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you are ever worried about the safety or wellbeing of a child, however small your concern may seem, please speak to us.

Data Collection Sheets

A quick reminder to please return your child's **data collection sheet as soon as possible** if you have not already done so.

It is extremely important that we hold accurate and up-to-date information for every child, particularly emergency contact details, medical information and details of those authorised to collect your child. Thank you to everyone who has already returned theirs.

Southend Road Gate – please help us keep everyone safe

We need everyone's help with an important safeguarding matter.

If you use the **Southend Road gate outside of our normal drop-off and collection times, please ensure that you close the gate securely behind you.**

We cannot have an external gate left open during the school day. An open gate presents a safeguarding risk and compromises the security of our school site and, most importantly, our children.

If we find that the Southend Road gate is repeatedly being left open, unfortunately we will have no alternative but to stop using this entrance during the school day. This would mean that Nursery parents and carers would need to access the school via the main entrance instead.

We really do not want to have to make this change, so please help us by taking those few extra seconds to check that the gate has closed properly behind you.

Please close the gate and help us keep all of our children safe. Thank you.

Attendance

Improving children's attendance continues to be a vital school priority. We understand that children do become ill and that there are extenuating circumstances for some absence. Please make sure that your child does attend school whenever possible. We are here to support families who may be having challenges getting their child to school every day. Please reach out to us if we can support. We have a new system in school that monitors children's attendance every week and generates emails to parents where there are genuine concerns. Our term time leave of absence for children policy is very clear – please see the further information below.

Dates for your diary

We know how helpful it is for families to have important school dates as early as possible. Our key dates for the coming term will therefore be included in **next week's newsletter**, so please keep an eye out for these.

Finally, I would like to say how lovely it is to see our school full of children again and to begin another year together. Thank you to our families for the support you give to the school and to your children – it makes such a difference.

I am very much looking forward to everything this year will bring.
With my very best wishes for a lovely weekend,

Vicky Treherne (previously Nellis)
Head Teacher



Our Safeguarding Children Team

Designated Safeguarding
Lead



Name: Mrs Nellis

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mr Otterson

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mrs Birkbeck

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mrs Brunskill

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mrs Lowres

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mrs Commons

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy



Name: Mrs Etherington

Designated Safeguarding
Deputy (After School Club)



Name: Helen Moss

If you are concerned about a child, please talk to us

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Child Protection and Safeguarding are always an absolute priority in school. Our designated safeguarding leads and deputies are: Vicky Nellis (Head Teacher), Simon Otterson (Deputy Head), Sarah Brunskill (Assistant Head), Esther Commons (SENDco), Jude Etherington (Curriculum leader), Vic Birkbeck (Family Support Worker), Helen Moss (Afterschool club lead). Please talk to any of us about any concerns that you may have. Posters displaying photos of the designated safeguarding leads are displayed around school.

If you have concerns about a child in your community, you have a number of options:

- 1) You can call 101 and ask for some welfare advice. This can be done anonymously.
- 2) You can visit the NSPCC website on: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/report/> or you can call the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000, You can report concerns here anonymously too.



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Dear Families,

It is really important that we work together to improve attendance for all of our children. One area which can be contentious is term-time holiday requests. We need families to be open and transparent regarding holidays (for safeguarding reasons and so children aren't asked to lie), but the statutory and legal guidance around this is much stricter and is a national priority for the government.

I know that the vast majority of families do not take term-time holidays, so I apologise for the blanket communication, but it is vital that families understand the systems and the legal guidance.

Leave of absence forms should continue to be completed for ALL requests. If you feel that you have exceptional circumstances around a term time leave of absence request for your child (as in there are exceptional reasons why the absence has to take place on a very specific date in term time for an exceptional reason (as outlined below)) then this needs to be outlined in writing. I will then consider the information provided to me and the decision will be made whether to authorise the absence, but again I must reinforce, I can now only authorise term-time leave of absence requests in the most exceptional circumstances and these will be very rare.

Holidays will not be authorised.

I am more than happy to discuss any aspect of your child's learning or well-being and have an open-door policy for this, however **term-time leave of absence procedures are very clear and I am not willing to discuss decisions made with families.** I will also not discuss other children's absences for confidentiality and GDPR reasons. When guidance is very clear, as it is now, questioning decisions made puts everyone in a difficult position and can put a strain on relationships between school and families, which we want to avoid at all costs. Aggressive communication towards staff will also not be accepted for any reason, including communication around term-time leave of absence requests.

Please see the guidance below which is taken from our Attendance Policy which meets the legal and statutory requirements set out by the Department for Education. This is the same as the communication sent out to parents in previous newsletters.

Best wishes

Vicky Nellis

Head Teacher

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as **where there are unavoidable reasons for the leave of absence not falling during school holiday time. For example, visiting a very sick relative in a different area or country, an immediate family member's wedding or an immediate family member's funeral. Exceptional Circumstances also apply if a child is involved in sporting or creative events, but school do need evidence of these dates.**

Exceptional circumstances are truly exceptional and this will be applied consistently across all requests.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

4.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Warning letters are no longer issued.

If issued a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice **cannot be issued** to the same parent in respect of the same child **within 3 years of the date of issue** of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

