

GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



Attendance Policy

November 2020

Review: November 2022



GUSTON

CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Ethos Statement

At Guston Church of England Primary School we believe that the way that we work together, behave with one another and seek to support and nurture others, gives life to our Christian ethos. It is one which is inclusive and seeks to encourage and inspire everyone to achieve their fullest potential.

Aims

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the opportunities available to them. We actively seek to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Promoting positive behaviour and anti-bullying
- Delivering a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' diversity, successes and achievements
- Celebrating good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Partnership with parents

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.

Requests for leave of absence

At Guston Church of England Primary School, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least a week in advance, and these will be considered on an individual case basis.

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw their children from school for holidays in term time. The school may however grant leave for a minimal period in very exceptional circumstances. The school will only authorise this absence if the attendance is over 95% and is not in either the months of September or May (unless this is leave is linked to armed forces operational deployment).

Parents are asked to keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum. However, the unique community which the school serves is taken into account and it is recognised that military families may be absent during term time – for example when serving fathers are granted leave following return from postings overseas.

Long-term absence

The school aims to support parents who have difficulties meeting these responsibilities and children with long term absence for medical needs. Action plans may need to be put in place for these children. We will work closely with other agencies to support families with irregular attendance and to action plan for the re-admittance and engagement of non-attending pupils such as the Behaviour and Attendance service, Educational Welfare Officers (EWO), Military Families' Officer, Social Services and Children's Safeguarding Services. However in extreme cases parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

Repeated absences

The school will work closely with parents to minimize the impact of any health or family circumstances that impact on a child's ability to attend school. In the case of persistent absences (attendance below 90%) due to ongoing medical issues, the school will work closely with parents and health to keep these to a minimum by drawing up a healthcare plan. In order to do this school may request up to date medical information and/or details of any diagnosis. Where attendance could be improved by administration of medicines, the school will apply the Medical Care Policy.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will need to contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to meet with the school leadership team and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will discuss and refer the matter to the School Liaison Officer who visits the school regularly.

The LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Rewards for good attendance

All classes receive an attendance certificate when all children have been in school for a whole week. The children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There is a special recognition and reward for children with 100 per cent attendance for the school year.

Attendance targets

The school's attendance is monitored by the Local Authority and where appropriate they will discuss whole school and individual pupil targets.

Registering

Please see addendum to changes in registration times for COVID 19.

The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions under the 1995 Education Act. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorized or unauthorized.

School starts at **8.45am**. Outside doors are opened at **8.35am** and staffed until **8.50am** when they are closed. Any children arriving after 8.50am come through the front entrance where their time of arrival is recorded by the school office staff. They will be marked as late by the office staff and the reason for their lateness will be recorded electronically.

The class teacher takes the SIMS register at **8.50 am** and this is sent electronically to the school office. All children must be marked present ('/' am, '\' pm) or marked 'N' for absence. If class teachers are told why a child is absent they must add the reason as a comment and who told them – so that office staff can decide whether they need to make a follow-up call.

If children arrive late in class via the front office, class teachers should mark them as Late before the register closes ('L'). If children arrive late in class but entered the building before the outside doors were closed at 8.50am they can be marked present.

The register officially closes at 8:55 am and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorized or unauthorized absence.

The register for the afternoon session is taken by 1.10pm.

The school operates First Day Calling when pupils are absent from school without reasons being known. Parents will be contacted by the office staff, on the numbers provided. In the absence of a response the school will work its way through available numbers in order of priority to ensure the safety of children. These calls do not have to be followed up in writing. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

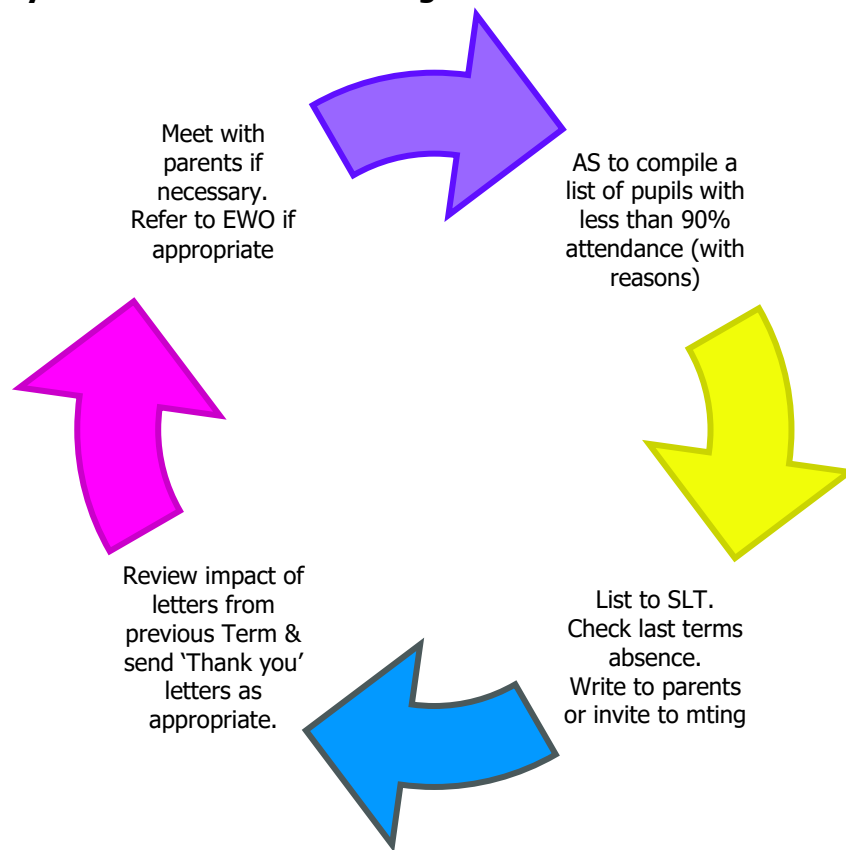
- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LEA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LEA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, only in exceptional circumstances.

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

Monitoring

The Office Manager, Senior Leadership Team and the SLO will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or less than 90% attendance on a more regular basis. Parents will be contacted, informed of the school's concerns and offered support. If no improvement is made a referral will be made to SLO. The SLT is responsible for monitoring patterns of attendance, the attendance of vulnerable groups and tracking attendance against targets.

Termly Cycle of Attendance Planning



Tracey Tee
November 2020

GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy COVID ADDENDUM

1) Aims and Scope

Guston Church of England Primary School are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2) Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year. This addendum reflects the latest advice from Kent County Council (LA). In section 4.2 of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's guidance on full reopening for schools
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

3) Attendance expectations

It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless: They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line with section Authorising Absence and Exceptional circumstances of our normal attendance policy

They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below).

4) Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus
- Medical Evidence.

4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results. If the pupil's test result is negative: the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness). If the person the pupil lives with tests negative: the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school

4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible via the school office 01304 206847 or email the office on office@guston.kent.sch.uk

Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).

If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

4.3 Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad

The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's exemptions list. The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

4.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown

The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan to office@guston.kent.sch.uk and a photocopy to the school address.

The pupil will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school.

4.5 Remote learning provision

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

The school uses School spider for its communication and on line learning. All pupils are provided with logins for School Spider, Purple Mash, Classroom Secrets, Sumdog (Y6) and TT Rockstars.

Teachers will place Termly Isolation Units on the school website to provide children who are self-isolating or not showing symptoms access to two weeks' work.

Where teachers are unable to attend because of Self isolation or shielding but are physically fit, they will continue to plan for the needs of children in their class, both at school and online.

On return children will be supported in small group work to ensure they can access ongoing learning despite their absence.

Teachers will check uploaded work after school but if teaching they will not be able to respond live to queries from pupils using the online learning platform.

Printed work will be provided where parents request it in the absence of access to electronic devices or sufficient internet resource. It remains the responsibility of the parent to inform the school if that is the case.

We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning and comment on this in future reports, but we will not track this information in the attendance register.

Parents are directed to the school website for guidance on the acceptable use policies for working at home and in school online. Children should be reminded that their work is visible and accessible to others and ensure they behave in a way that keeps themselves and others safe and happy.

5. Recording attendance

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' as defined in our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus

Pupils must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day. The register for the first session will be checked 15 minutes from the opening of the year group bubble. All class attendance will be reported and completed by 9:10 am. The register for the second session will be taken 10 minutes from completion of the bubble's lunch break. All class registers are closed by 1:40 pm.

Year	Drop Off	Lunch	Pick UP
6	8:30-8:40am	12:30-1:30	3:15pm
5	8:30-8:40am	12:30-1:30	3:10pm
4	8:30-8:40am	12:00-1:00	3:10pm
3	8:40-8:50am	12:00-1:00	3:00pm
2	8:40-8:50am	12:00-1:00	3:00pm
1	8:50-9:00am	12:00-1:00	2:50pm
R	8:50-9:00am	12:00-1:00	2:50pm

6. Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by telephone, email or text message on the first day of absence.
- This will be followed by letters and/or home visits as appropriate
- Where children have an allocated social worker or have previously been missing in education Children's Social Services and/or School Attendance Service will be informed.
- If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus we urge parents to contact us for a telephone or a Zoom consult to explain the school's approach to keeping them safe. The School Risk Assessment will be shared to explain the actions being taken to keep all children and adults safe.
- Attendance will continue to be monitored on a termly basis by the Senior Leadership Team.

This addendum will be reviewed in line with guidance from the LA, DFE or the HSE and adapted as required to respond to the COVID pandemic.

Tracey Tee November 2020

Appendix 2: School attendance

Statutory guidance and departmental advice - August 2013 School Attendance

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
 - act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. **The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Deleting a pupil from the admission register

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently do not provide for a school to delete a pupil from the admission register where the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age and has failed to meet the academic requirements for entry to their sixth-form.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will allow this bringing the regulations into line with the new School Admissions Code 2012, which allows schools to set academic requirements for entry into sixth form.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 for each child if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.