

GUSTON CHURCH OF
ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL



Attendance Policy
September 2015



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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 CEP, 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.

Legal Measures

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices are interventions available to promote better school attendance and behaviour. Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects. These measures are permissive and it is for individual governing bodies and local authorities to decide whether to use them. In exercising these powers governing bodies, head teachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties⁸.

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 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 visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will discuss and refer the matter to the Education Welfare 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 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. Each term classes with the highest attendance are receive a certificate.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Registering

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 **8.50am** 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 **10.30 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 and parents will be contacted by the office staff. 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.

If the office staff are unable to contact parents and a reason is not given within 1 week, the office staff will write to the parents and refer to the EWO when appropriate.

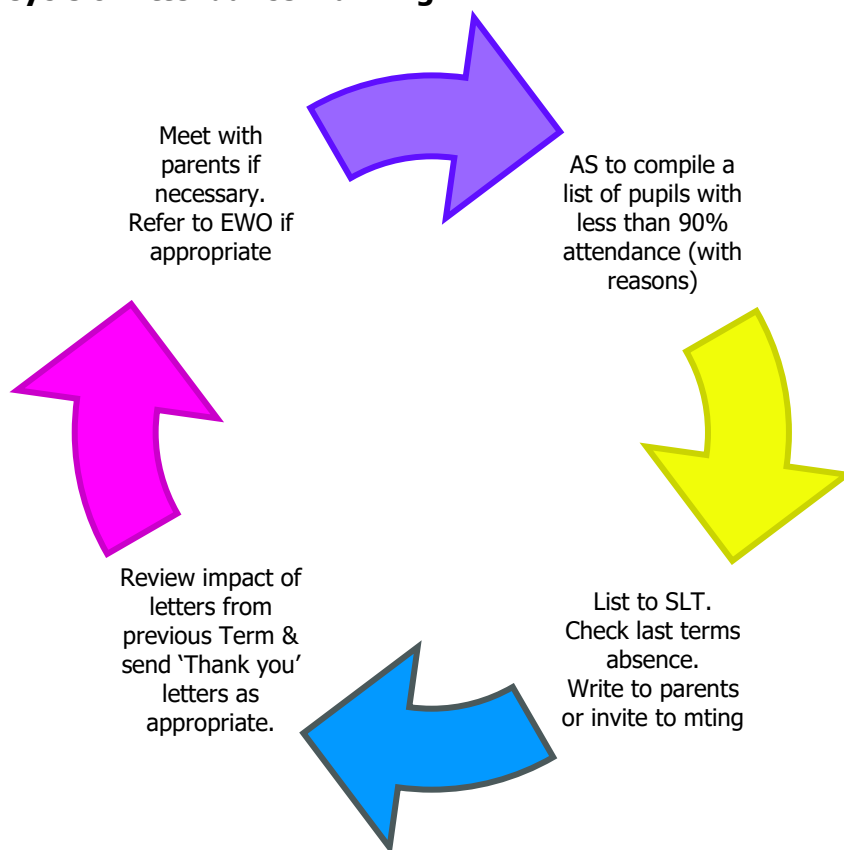
A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

A copy of the electronic register is printed weekly. Paper copies are retained for at least 6 years.

Monitoring

The office manager, Senior Leadership Team and the EWO 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 EWO. The SLT is responsible for monitoring patterns of attendance, the attendance of vulnerable groups and tracking attendance against targets.

Termly Cycle of Attendance Planning



Deby Day, September 2015
Headteacher

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 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.