

# GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

September 2024

Agreed by FGB on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Review Date: September 2025**

**Statement of intent:**



## GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Vision**

*Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, branching into the world*

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever-changing world.

#### **Introduction**

Guston CEP School recognise how attendance is linked to our Safeguarding role, knowing who is absent and why is fundamental to effective Safeguarding. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This includes:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

#### **Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)
- [School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school [census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

At Guston, our aim is to work in partnership with families to:

### **Expect**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

### **Monitor**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

### **Listen and understand**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

### **Facilitate support**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

### **Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

### **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Regularly report attendance figures to FGB
- Liaise with KCC PRU and Attendance Service (KPAS)
- Work with education welfare offices to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is currently shared between Deby Day and Tracey Tee who can be contacted via the school office.

### **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **Admin Staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system & report any concerns they have to the SLT

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Recording attendance**

### Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

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 (registration code in brackets):

- Present (/ \) / = morning session \= afternoon session
- Late (L)
- Attending an approved off-site educational trip or activity (V)
- Absent to attend a medical or dental appointment (M)
- Absent due to an exceptional circumstance (C)
- Absence for a religious observance (R)
- Absence for illness (I)
- Suspended or permanently excluded (E)
- Absence not authorised by the school (G)
- Unknown reason for absence (N)
- Attending an approved sporting activity (P)
- Arrived after registration is closed (U)
- Planned whole school closure (#)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (X)
- Parent travelling for occupational circumstances (T)
- Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (K)
- Absent due to part-time timetable (C2)
- Additional codes can be found [here](#) but not recorded in this policy as they are unlikely to be used in our setting (eg work experience, public examination, lack of access arrangements)

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See [here](#) for the complete list of DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Registration opens at 8.35 each morning and closes at 8.50am. The register for the second session (afternoon) will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open (if necessary) until 1.10pm.

### **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late must report to the school office.

### **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home and, in extreme circumstances, request a welfare check from the police.

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **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 for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a circumstance of familial significance which is outside the control of the parents. 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 one week before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) sets out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **Legal sanctions**

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

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, 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.

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance**

- 95 - 100% attendance – the class teacher or form tutor to investigate and notify school office of concerns. School office to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will work with our Attendance Officer (KPAS)
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

[KCC Attendance Referral Pathway](#)

### **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

## Termly Cycle of Attendance Planning

