

Gossops Green Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Last Reviewed on: March 2023
Next review due by: March 2024
Staff Member Responsible: Debbie Bullen

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1. Aim

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

- 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.

2. 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](#)

This policy has also been written with regard to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, and the Crawley Schools Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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 Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

3.3 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
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Debbie Bullen. She can be reached via office@gossopsgreen.org.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all children are accounted for every morning and afternoon
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader
- Working with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence

3.5 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 via Arbor or, if the system is down, via a paper register.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Monitor the absence line and absence email address on a day-to-day basis and record absences onto Arbor
- Text / phone contacts of children who are not present at the start of the day and for whom no reason has been provided, asking them to contact the school
- Inform the DSL team, through email or phone, of children who are still unaccounted for by 10:30am

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day and is on time
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8:50am on the day of the 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
- Complete a leave of absence form if they wish to take their child out of school during term time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

All pupils are added to Arbor when they enter the school and registers are taken twice a day. Pupils can arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:50am on each school day and the gates to the school grounds are opened between these times. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

We use the standard DfE attendance codes and the details of any amendments to the attendance register are recorded automatically on Arbor. We will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent (and specify whether this absence is authorised or unauthorised)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Late before or after the register closes

See appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 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 the start of the school day or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or emailing our dedicated absence email absence@gossopsgreen.org.uk.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical evidence, e.g. a doctor's note or appointment card, if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. Parents will be informed via letter that they need to provide medical evidence in these cases.

If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a re-integration programme for that child.

4.3 Planned absence

Medical and dental appointments should be made (where possible) outside of school hours. If this cannot be avoided, the child should be returned to school immediately after the appointment, unless advised otherwise by medical professionals. 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, along with evidence e.g. appointment letter or text reminder, where possible.

Any request for a planned absence (other than medical or dental appointments) should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. Parents need to complete a leave of absence request form, accessible online via [Parental request to school to authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances \(office.com\)](#). Alternatively, a paper copy of the form can be requested from the school office.

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Principal can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives after 8:50am:

- Before the register has closed at 9am, will be marked using the 'L' code
- After 9am so after the register has closed, will be marked using the 'U' code. This will be classed as an 'unauthorised absence' for the morning session

Any child arriving after the start of the school day, needs to enter via the school office, where they will be marked in on Arbor and asked why they are late. If children are regularly late, then parents will be contacted to see if there is an issue which can be resolved. If children are regularly arriving after the register is closed, parents may be written to and warned that they may face a fixed penalty warning.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text, email and / or call the pupil's emergency contacts on the morning of the first unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit, where members of the DSL team visit the home to ascertain the child's safety and reason for absence.
- If the door is not answered, a compliments slip will be put through the door, asking parents to call the school.
- If there is still no contact, the school may contact social care or the police for a welfare check to ensure the safety of the child.
- If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Education Welfare Officer
- If a child is absent for over ten days and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to Pupil Entitlement, which will make reasonable enquiries.
- If a child leaves the school and there is no evidence of them joining a new school, we will make a referral to the Child Missing in Education Team

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Each child's yearly absence percentage is included on written reports, which are sent out towards the end of each term. Parents can also see their child's real-time attendance through the Arbor Parent Portal and parents can request an attendance certificate for their child from the school office.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absences

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness
- Medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- A significant family event e.g. wedding or funeral (only the day of the event can be authorised)
- School entrance exams

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school follows the West Sussex guidelines on unauthorised absence and refers any child who accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period to the Local Authority (each half day counts as one absence)

The local authority can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. The FPN is an alternative to prosecution and gives parents/carers an opportunity to discharge their criminal liability by paying a fine

of £120, per parent per child, which must be paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, the fine is reduced to £60. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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

5.3 Extended absence from school

If a child is off school for an extended period of time of unauthorised absence, parents will be warned, in writing, that their child may be taken off roll if s/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with the Child Missing in Education Team and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions (North) on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is celebrated and children who achieve 100% attendance each term are given a certificate to take home. Class attendance figures are also analysed each term and the classes with over 95% attendance are celebrated and given a collective reward.

7. Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring individual attendance

The school closely monitors the attendance of all children using built in analysis tools in Arbor. Attendance data is also analysed on an individual child by child basis fortnightly by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, who identifies patterns and instigates support that can be put in place.

7.2 Analysing whole school and cohort attendance

Whole school attendance and absence data is analysed monthly by the Education Welfare Officer to identify cohorts that need additional support with their attendance. This analysis is shared with governors termly and compared to the national average. Interventions to support identified groups are initiated based on this data analysis.

7.3 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. Persistent absentees are added to a custom group in Arbor and both the attendance officer and the designated senior leader responsible for attendance are alerted when a child joins this group.

The school then:

- Emails parents to let them know that their child's attendance has fallen below 90%
- Analyses the reasons for the low level of attendance and continues to monitor attendance fortnightly to see if this improves

- If attendance does not improve, parents are contacted to discuss their child's attendance and engagement at school and reasonable adjustments or wider support services may be offered to remove the barriers to attendance. Examples may include providing Nurture Team support, offering a quiet route into school, providing access to a trusted adult in school or referring families to external professional support.
- Significant cases are referred to the Education Welfare Officer

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, yearly by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective educational establishment
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (unauthorised)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit organised, or approved, by the school
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed as a result of a local/national emergency
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/INSET day

Appendix 2

Crawley Schools PARENTAL REQUEST TO SCHOOL TO AUTHORISE AN ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Print back to back)

Child's Name	
Date of birth	
Year Group	
Class	
Name of people making request & relationships with child	
Address	
Phone Number	
Email for response	
Start date of requested absence	
Last date of requested absence	
Number of days requested (weekdays only)	

Absences will only be authorised if this request is made at least two weeks in advance of the dates your child will be absent from school AND if the circumstances of the absence are exceptional. There is no entitlement to take a child out of school for a family holiday.

The law states that parents must ensure their children regularly attend school to receive their education. The Principal can only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional is likely to be rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Whether the absence is exceptional is at the Principal's discretion based on their assessment of the situation and can vary from school to school. A weeks' absence for holiday and a weeks' absence for illness would give an attendance figure below 96%. The government considers attendance unacceptable below 96%.

The Principal will consider the reasons for your absence request. You may be asked to provide evidence to support your request. Please note that having already booked a holiday will not be considered as a good reason for term time absence. In relation to 'unavoidable' absence, the head teacher will consider whether the event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time. Issues of cost will not be considered as an exceptional reason.

If you wish for this absence to be authorised, you will need to fully explain (together with evidence) why the circumstances of this absence are exceptional.

Why is this absence exceptional?

(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Continued over...

Declaration

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is true. I understand that if I do not fully complete this form, fully respond to requests for further information or that ultimately the absence is not authorised, my child's attendance will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I understand that I must ensure my child attends school regularly and that failing to do so is a criminal offence which may result in legal proceedings being taken against me, either through a Penalty Notice or by prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Signed:..... Date:

(Parent/Carer)

Full Name:.....

Unless further information is required, a decision will be sent to you within 5 school days.

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Previous days authorised absence:

Previous sickness days:

Number of days authorised:

Number of days unauthorised:

CRAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING

Child's Name:

Dates requested as absence from learning:

Has been authorised ☐

Has not been authorised ☐

Reason for non-authorisation (to be highlighted):

- There is no legal entitlement to holidays during term time and this should be avoided if at all possible. They will automatically be classed as unauthorised absence.
- Previous/current attendance is less than 95%.
- The 'once in a lifetime' event could have reasonably been scheduled at another time.
- The period of absence requested exceeds that required for the 'unavoidable and exceptional event'.
- The reasons provided do not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Other:

SIGNED:

DATE:

Appendix 3

Attendance of below 90% - Early Alert

Current Date (Short)

Dear Recipient(s) Salutation

RE: Student(s) Full Name Attendance Percentage: Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year

In order to ensure that each of our pupils are provided with the best possible education, it is clearly important that they are in school as much as possible. This email is an early alert to inform you that Student(s) First Name's attendance has fallen below 90%, which is less than the majority of the children in the school. This means that Student(s) First Name is missing out on activities that his/her/their friends are doing and also that Student(s) First Name is having to work extra hard to catch up on the learning that he/she/they has missed.

We appreciate that sometimes absence is unavoidable but would like to work with you to ensure good school attendance for Student(s) First Name. Going forward, if there is anything that we can do to support you with Student(s) First Name's attendance, then please do get in touch via email or by phoning the school office.

Yours sincerely

Sender's Signature

Mrs D Bullen
Assistant Principal

Appendix 4

Absences from school – Medical Evidence request

Current Date (Short)

Dear Recipient(s) Salutation

RE: Student(s) Full Name Attendance Percentage: Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year

Following our regular inspection of the school register, we would like to bring to your attention that Student(s) First Name's level of attendance has dropped significantly. We understand that there are certain circumstances where non-attendance is unavoidable, but Student(s) First Name is officially classed by the Department for Education as a 'persistent absentee'.

Going forward, please avoid medical appointments and days off during school time whenever possible and aim for 100% school attendance. Further absences will now be recorded as unauthorised, unless you can provide medical documentation such as an appointment card, prescriptions or hospital letters.

Hopefully, Student(s) First Name will be able to achieve full attendance over the coming weeks so that their attendance improves significantly. If you or Student(s) First Name are experiencing any difficulties you wish to make us aware of, please telephone the office to discuss how we may support you.

Yours sincerely

Sender's Signature

Mrs D Bullen
Assistant Principal

Appendix 5

FIXED PENALTY WARNING

Pupil: Student(s) Full Name Attendance percentage: Report Field: Statutory/Roll Call Attendance (Present) this academic year

Dear Recipient(s) Salutation

We are writing to inform you that Student(s) Full Name has had XX sessions of unauthorised absence since the start of the term. Children's absence is unauthorised if they have had time off school which has not been authorised by the Principal or if they have arrived at school after the register closes (after 9am).

We wanted you to be aware that, if your child has unauthorised absence for 10 sessions in 10 weeks, then we are required to refer you to the Local Authority, who may issue you with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This gives you an opportunity to discharge your criminal liability by paying £120, which must be paid within 28 days. If you pay the FPN within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £60. Please be aware that this amount is per parent, per child. On some occasions, the Local Authority may also issue FPNs outside of the above criteria.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss this in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Sender's Signature

Mrs D Bullen
Assistant Principal