



Gateford Park Primary School

Attendance Policy

**(Written in conjunction with the new National
Framework for Penalty Notices)**

September 2024

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Signature:

Approved by Chair of Governors: Geoff Young

Signature:

Date:

Date of next review: September 2025

Attendance Policy

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Gateford Park Primary School and runs in conjunction with the Nottinghamshire Local Authority Improving School Attendance Toolkit.

At Gateford Park, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride in their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Gateford Park encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” (DfE 1999).***

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a **minimum** of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Local Authority so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

School's responsibilities:

- Promote the importance of good attendance to parents and children
- Celebrate cohort attendance of 95% or above in Good News assemblies and in the school newsletter – weekly attendance by cohort of 95/96% will earn the class a Bronze Award; 97/98% a Silver Award and 99/100% a Gold Award. Awards will be displayed in the main reception area.

- Senior leaders and governors proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- Notify parents when attendance is at risk of becoming an issue and offer timely and appropriate support
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- Where appropriate, agree a 'Parenting Contract' - This is a voluntary written agreement between parents and either the local council or the school's governing body. Its purpose is for us to agree to find ways to improve your child's attendance. *If you refuse to make a contract or you do not stick to it, it can be used as evidence if the local council decides to prosecute you.*
- play an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Ensure that all reasonable support has been offered to a family before legal measures are started.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Punctuality

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. The school gates open promptly at 8.40am for all children and class teachers collect children from the playground at 8.45am
- To ensure children who are late after 8.50 am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30 am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephone, email or the school text messaging service.

- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted by the school office *before* 9:30am.

Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must request this in writing in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head Teacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To write to the school to ask for leave of absence.
- To complete and submit the letter in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Head Teacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised and referred to the local authority, who will assess the situation and may choose to issue fines, or in more serious cases, refer the matter to the courts for prosecution.

Please note, in the case of penalty notices being issued:

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised holiday absence during term time.

5 consecutive days of term time leave:

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period:

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Head Teacher. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Attendance data is regularly monitored by senior leaders and reported to the DfE and governing body. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the school and will be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any

appropriate support. A home visit may be conducted to ascertain the reason for absence when concerns are highlighted.

Persistent Latecomers

Having good attendance also means being on time and not being late to school. Children who arrive late can feel embarrassed, left out and miss out on important introductions to lessons. Punctuality is an essential life skill that needs to be taught from the very beginning. Letters will be issued to the parents/carers of children who are regularly late to school, outlining the school's concerns and offering support to improve punctuality.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:30am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures.

Please note that this also applies to children whose parents frequently request to collect children early without sufficiently valid reasons.