



St Gabriel's CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Our statement of mission:

Our aim is to nurture children with the confidence and self-belief to achieve their best; to be resilient in their learning and ambitious in their hopes and dreams; to live in harmony, respecting others; to have the courage to think for themselves; to search and question throughout life's journey and, if their paths should lead them, to find a personal faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ.

Seeking to nurture:

sel**F**-belief cour**A**ge res**I**llience ambi**T**ion **H**armony

"Stand firm... be courageous" 1 Corinthians 16:13

Revised: Autumn 2021

To be reviewed: Autumn 2024

School Attendance Policy

Aims

At St Gabriel's we expect all our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance and punctuality can adversely affect a pupil, their class, and the school's performance and has potential longer term consequences. The Head Teacher, Staff and Governors aim to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality and have adopted and apply appropriate procedures to deal with such matters.

As a school we believe that the most important factor in promoting school attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school – by both children and parents. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all our children. This includes our parents/carers – that, whatever their own personal experience of school may have been, they feel welcomed, encouraged and supported; that they recognise and value our school ethos in promoting a happy and productive 'family' environment.

Statutory Framework

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

Rights and Responsibilities

Ensuring all pupils have excellent school attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of all school staff, parents/carers and the pupils themselves.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who, for whatever reason, experience attendance difficulties will be offered a range of support.

Pupils are encouraged to talk through any problems that may be the root cause of any attendance issue(s) and where appropriate / necessary, parents will be contacted. Pupils with consistently good attendance or pupils who have overcome significant difficulties relating to their attendance are praised or rewarded.

Parents' responsibilities

Parents / carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure that their child is attending school on a regular basis.

Attendance and Punctuality:

- a) The primary responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time rests with parents / carers. They must also ensure their child is properly dressed, equipped with learning material and in a fit condition to learn.
- b) Attendance and punctuality can be affected by a wide range of school, home-based or community factors.

- c) In reference to children being in a fit condition to learn, parents please note: children who are in the habit of staying up late or regularly missing breakfast may be tired at the start of the day and not in the correct state to learn.
- d) If a child is prevented for any reason from attending school or is late, parents must notify the school as soon as possible by telephone and/or in writing.
- e) A child's absence from school will be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is provided by the parent / carer.
- f) Parents / carers will be notified promptly of any concerns relating to their child's attendance or punctuality.
- g) Communication to parents / carers regarding such matters may include phone calls, letters, or a home visit from the Education Welfare Officer.

Appointments

- Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making dental / medical appointments for their children during school hours.
- Parents are encouraged to make routine appointments during school holidays or after school hours.
- Family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observation is acceptable for short absences but must be requested in advance.
- Unacceptable reasons for children missing school include shopping and birthdays.

This is not an exhaustive list.

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.

Office staff will follow up on absence to ascertain the reason by contacting parents by telephone or email.

Lateness & Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Parents will be informed if our records show persistent lateness.

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion. Please refer to the Absence During Term Time Policy.

Penalty Notices

The 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 £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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.

Registration

Each Class Register is taken during morning and afternoon registration sessions and is marked in accordance with the regulation and symbols as set out by the Department for Education. Pupils arriving after the yard gates have closed must enter school through the main entrance and report to the office. These children will then be issued with a 'late' card to issue to their class teacher to ensure that the register is marked accurately.

Registers are monitored daily and act as the initial warning system for a number of issues which may affect the child's welfare, including truancy, child protection, illness and a range of home- and school-based issues.

The school office will contact parents of children who have not telephoned the school by 9.30 a.m. to provide a reason for the absence.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The EWO regularly and independently checks the school registers to ensure the correct procedures are being followed. Accurate marking of registers is fundamental to the whole school approach to promoting good attendance and staff adhere strictly to that requirement.

The EWO follows up absences by telephoning and / or home visiting parents / carers. The EWO relies on data from the attendance register being precise, therefore amendments to registers are not permitted, as inaccurate, amended or incorrect information undermines the partnership school develops with pupils, parents / carers and other agencies involved with or supporting school and it is acknowledged that this may also damage confidence in the school, and may result in a child being wrongly punished at home.

Procedures For Following up Absences

At St Gabriel's we offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow-up action will be taken.

- The school office will contact with parents of absent children who have not already informed the school of the reason for their absence by 9.30 a.m.
- Parents of pupils returning to school after a period of absence must confirm the reasons for the absence. Failure to provide a written note or offer a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is a key point in absence monitoring and the school administrator will contact the parents again.
- Should a pupil be persistently absent or late, and if the school's efforts to effect an improvement in attendance or punctuality have been unsuccessful, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified.

Specific Strategies

- Parents will be informed of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- Staff complete registers accurately for each session and will bring to the attention of the Head Teacher and Education Welfare Officer any absences that are cause for concern or that appear suspicious.
- The Education Welfare Officer will meet regularly with the school Office Manager and other staff in school and professional staff from other agencies that support school in order to identify, assess and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- All parents / carers are asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill.
- The school office will make telephone contact, initially using the home contact details, when a child is absent, should the parents have failed to notify the school that their child will be absent and provide a reason for that absence, e.g. illness.
- Where a pupil is developing a pattern of occasional absences the parent / carer will be contacted to discuss the pattern.
- The Education Welfare Officer follows up absences that are suspicious or causing concern.
- Where appropriate the school and the Education Welfare Officer will work closely with the local authority to take legal action against parents / carers who are unlawfully keeping their children from school.
- Attendance data is regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy / practice.
- Good or greatly improved attendance is recognised and rewarded.

Outcomes

The Head Teacher and Staff, supported by the Governors, will do all they can to ensure that pupils come happily, willingly, regularly and punctually to school and ensure that they gain the greatest possible value from their education.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
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/bank holiday/INSET day