



# St Gabriel's CE Primary School

## Attendance Policy



### Our Vision Statement:

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

*Seeking to nurture:*

Sel**F**-belief   Cour**A**ge   Res**I**lience   Ambi**T**ion   **H**armony

**“Stand firm... be courageous” 1 Corinthians 16:13**

**Revised: Summer 2023**

**To be reviewed: Summer 2026**

# School Attendance Policy

## Aims

*The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.*

*It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*

*Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2... have higher rates of attendance... compared to those with the lowest attainment.*

### ***Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE September 2022***

As a school, we will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to parents and analyse data to identify patterns of absence.

Good attendance is seen as a learned behaviour.

We will aim to effectively overcome barriers to good attendance by building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend 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.

We will also promote punctuality and encourage parents to establish positive routines that establish good habits for a lifetime.

We recognise that children with long-term medical conditions or specific special educational needs, may have issues which impact upon attendance.

## **Statutory Framework**

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 also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

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

### **The Governing Body**

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
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The Headteacher & Designated Leader Responsible for Attendance**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data, with the School Business Manager, 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 Inclusion Officer**

The school Inclusion Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data with the School Business Manager (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **School 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
- Follow up absences, following school's procedures.

### **Class Teachers & Support Staff**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They will also promote the importance of good attendance alongside good behaviour, making it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life.

### **Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

### **Parents' responsibilities**

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

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **Recording Attendance**

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:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils **must arrive in school by 8.55am** on each school day.

The register for the first session **will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am.**

The register for the second session will be taken at **12.45pm (Infants) and 1.00pm (Juniors)** and will be kept open for 30 minutes from these times.

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.

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.

## **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. This can be done by phone call, email or letter.

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. See term time absence below.

## **Lateness & Punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register closes at 9.30am, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After 9.30am, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Punctuality is seen as very important and parents will be encouraged to ensure that children arrive on time through eg: initial induction into school procedures, parents' evenings, end of year reports, newsletters.

Parents will receive official notification letters where five or more late arrivals have occurred with a term.

## **Following up Unexplained Absence**

- The school office will contact 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 taken without prior notification, must confirm the reasons for the absence. Failure to provide a satisfactory explanation will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.
- School will 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
- 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, a request for Inclusion Officer involvement will be made.

## **Reporting to Parents**

School will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels and actively promote school's target attendance – 95% and above.

- Termly absence reports are sent to parents of children whose absence falls below 90%.
- Termly 'lates' reports are sent to parents after five late arrivals in a single term.
- 'Concern' or Significant Concern' letters are sent to parents, as appropriate.

- Wherever possible, face to face conversations with parents are used to pre-empt attendance that is becoming persistent, prior to formal letters being issued.
- Letters and conversations with parents should always provide advice and assistance to improve an individual child's attendance.

## **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.

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 2 weeks before the absence**, using school's Application for Discretionary Leave form, accessible via the school's website or the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where Eid celebrations fall in term time (1 day only per event)
- Immediate family bereavement or marriage for a brief absence (eg 1-2 days)
- Child receiving medical treatment abroad
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

Please refer to school's 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.

## **Monitoring attendance**

School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governors.

## **Analysing attendance**

School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **Using data to improve attendance**

School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **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
- Engage with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, initially in writing and then face to face, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **School's Inclusion & Attendance Officer**

The Inclusion Officer makes termly visits to school to monitor attendance and absence. Analysis takes place of SIMS and FFT data to identify trends and persistent absentees.

The Inclusion Officer will arrange home visits when school's efforts to effect an improvement in attendance or punctuality have been unsuccessful and/or when parents choose not to engage with school.

## **Whole School Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality**

- Parents will be informed of the importance of good attendance and punctuality through eg initial induction into school procedures, parents' evenings, end of year reports, newsletters, certificates.

- School's Attendance Policy is included in induction packs for parents for all new children.
- **Good attendance is seen as a learned behaviour.** Children are rewarded within a whole school culture of good attendance, with Gold, Silver and Bronze rewards being issued termly to celebrate continuing or improved attendance.
- Parents will be provided with attendance reports when absence becomes a concern and support offered to address any underlying issues and barriers to good attendance – both in school or those at home.
- The Inclusion Officer will meet regularly with the school Business Manager to identify, assess and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

## **Safeguarding – children absent / missing from education**

**Children missing from education – are not on any school roll**

**Children absent from education – are on the school roll, but are regularly not attending**

We recognise that there may be a link between low attendance and safeguarding issues. Children absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

Children with low attendance may be more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. We therefore strive to ensure that every child has good attendance and punctuality at school in order to reduce their vulnerability.

Consideration will be given to supporting children and families where attendance or punctuality is a concern. This may be done through the CAF Process or referral to statutory services such as Children's Social Care.

## **Links to other policies**

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Absence During Term Time
- Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious

		observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day