



# Attendance Policy

Name of Policy	Attendance
Review Committee	SLT
Last review date	September 2022
Next review date	September 2023

This policy applies to all children registered at this school and is made available to all on the school website.

GUST 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
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all students realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in students 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

## 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 their learning goals.

## Punctuality

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive at school on time

- 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 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by phoning the school office.
- To provide medical evidence, where possible, on the child's return to school.
- 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 after 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 complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior)

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without Headteacher authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time.

### 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 Headteacher. These requests must be discussed with the school.

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.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

### Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate excessive or unusual absence
- To investigate excessive lateness

- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required

## Children Missing in Education

Children Missing from Education are described by Northumberland County Council as: “children of compulsory school age who are on a school roll but have not attended for a period of 20 consecutive school days (recorded as unauthorised absence) and the whereabouts of the family is unknown.”

Schools must provide the LA with details of pupils who have **ten continuous days** of unauthorised absence and cannot establish the reason for the absence and their whereabouts unknown by following the procedure below.

Action to be taken when a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown

A registered pupil is deemed to be missing when:

- a. he or she fails to attend school without any explanation and;
- b. the school has been unable to establish the reason, or locate the pupil with any of the contact names at the last known address, or from intelligence from the wider school community; or
- c. the pupil’s parents/carers have not provided any information to indicate a change of education provision, unavoidable cause for the pupil’s absence or that the pupil is travelling with them whilst in pursuit of their business.

## Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 9:30am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children.

Parents/carers should note that fixed penalty notices may be issued by the EWO to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

## APPENDIX A - School full reopening: COVID-19 guidance for September

### Response to September full school reopening in relation to COVID-19

#### Current guidance for school attendance

In line with current government guidance, school attendance will be mandatory from the start of the new school year, except where statutory exemptions apply.

It is understood that some students may be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19).

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.

Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will immediately offer them access to remote education. We will monitor engagement with this activity.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

#### Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

All other children must attend school. We will bear in mind the potential concerns of students, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include children living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of children with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend discussing their concerns with school so that we can provide reassurance of the measures that are being put in place to reduce the risk in school.

Students of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

There is an expectation that parents/carers will let the school know if a child is unable to attend and the reason. Contact will be made with the child's parent or carer on the first day of absence where this does not happen.

This guidance is subject to change. Click [here](#) for full government guidance on school reopenings.