



FOREST OF DEAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FEDERATION

PARKEND PRIMARY & YORKLEY PRIMARY

Attendance 2025 - 2026

Ratified: September 2025

Signed by:

Executive
Headteacher

Chair of Governors

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Statement of Intent

The Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation believes that improving attendance is everyone's business and that in order to facilitate outstanding teaching and learning, outstanding attendance is essential. Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. **We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.**

Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partner, we aim to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting partnerships.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to a full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absences, including persistent and severe absence.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The School's Administrators are the Attendance Officers and can be contacted via

admin@parkend.gloucs.sch.uk / 01594 562407 – Mrs K King

admin@yorkley.gloucs.sch.uk / 01594 562201 – Mrs C Hudson

Parents will be expected to contact the Attendance Officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

The Federation Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs K Burke (Executive Headteacher) – who works closely with the Federation Inclusion team Mrs H. Wright (SENDCo) and Miss A Sime (Family Support Worker).

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)'

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints if relevant regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school and being the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring the federation follows the DfE and Gloucestershire County Council's expectations on Penalty Notices.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently, attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The Attendance Officer(s) are responsible for:

- Supporting the Executive Head Teacher (EHT) in developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance, passing onto the inclusion team.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the federation.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Communicating messages to pupils, parents and staff.
- Where there is lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending school every day.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance if required.

Parents are responsible for:

- Having high expectations on attendance, making sure their child attends school on time daily.
- Reporting their child's absence before 9.15 a.m.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA if required.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.

3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments, which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency which the school has granted leave.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained and granted.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

4. Attendance Expectations

The Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site between 8.35am – 8.45am. Pupils will have a 15-minute morning break and an hour lunch break.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked at 8.45am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark. Late marks are added up over the year and included on school reports.
- The morning register will close at 9.00am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm. It is closed once all names are called.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

5. Absence Procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:15am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. two school days for sickness.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is practical on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school SIMS system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Attendance Officer or someone from the Inclusion Team. The school will inform the LA of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the school will write to the parents. If the attendance continues to drop, the Attendance Officer will inform the FSW / Inclusion Team and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent(s).

If a child leaves the school, contact will be made to the next school before they are removed off role. If the family choose to home educate, the Local Authority will be involved and informed.

6. Attendance Register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Late.
- Off, due to illness.
- Attending an approved Educational Visit / Sporting event.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- C2 = Leave of absence granted for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

7. Authorising Parental Absence Requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Executive Headteacher or in their absence the Deputy

Executive Headteacher. The Executive Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason. Being abusive towards the Executive Headteacher/Deputy head teacher will not be tolerated. (In line with our 'Managing aggressive behaviour from parents and visitors')

Holidays in Term Time

The law 'The Education Pupil Registration' (England) Regulations 2006' states that parents/carers do not have a right to take their child(ren) out of school for a holiday in term time. The Education (Penalty Notice) Regulations further strengthen the duty on LAs and schools to address the issue of non-attendance robustly.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for a holiday as a right. School holiday request forms must be submitted at least two weeks in advance. Forms are available from the school website or from the school office / entrance.

If the parent/carer keeps a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.

Please do not lie about going on holiday or encourage your child to do so. If this happens and the school is informed, you remain at risk of a fine.

Penalty Notices may be issued by the LA under the following circumstances:

- **An excluded pupil found in a public place.** (Parents must be notified in writing by the school, at the time of the exclusion, of their duty to ensure the child is not found in a public place during school hours and the days to which it applies).
- **Unauthorised holiday during term time** - Code G. A minimum of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence from school during term time, in order to take a holiday, within the immediately preceding ten-week period.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – not there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a minimum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce the fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

- [Leaflet for parents - Penalty notices](#)
- [Leaflet for parents - Attendance](#)
- [Leaflet for parents - Prosecution](#)

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Penalty Notices issued to parents of children seen in a public place within 5 days following an exclusion from school are set at £60/£120 and are not subject to the rolling 3-year period.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/>

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Executive Headteacher (or Deputy Executive Head) in writing using the leave of absence form, prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Executive Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

If term-time, leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practical. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence, on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

8. SEND and Health Related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC Plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues, cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.

- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

9. Absence in the school day

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school and are collected by a parent/carer.

10. Attendance Intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Attendance Officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Meetings / phone calls with parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

11. Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. Social Services.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Inclusion team will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Inclusion team will work with the Executive Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the class

teacher. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Officer / Inclusion Team will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. Children's Social Care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

12. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in Need.
- Children in Care.
- Young Carers.
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM / PP
- Pupils with EAL.
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

13. Penalty notices and Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the school will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Executive headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

14. Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The Attendance Officer(s) will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.

- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, CIC and pupils eligible for FSM or Pupil Premium children.
- Pupils at risk of PA.
- Pupils who fall below 90% attendance

The Attendance Officer will share analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Officer will provide regular reports to the Inclusion team / Executive Headteacher who will share with the Governing Body through Headteacher reports.

The Governing Body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

15. Training of Staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff can receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Administration staff can attend training in line with this policy and the Attendance Champion will ensure high expectations and consistency from all staff.

16. Links with other Policies

- Safeguarding and child protection
- SEND
- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying and Hate
- Child in Care
- Young Carers
- Pupil Premium
- School Closure
- First Aid Policy
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions
- Suspension and Exclusions
- Complaints
- Supporting children with medical conditions

Attendance Monitoring Procedures:

The Forest of Dean Community Schools Federation has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. Attendance is monitored by Classroom Teachers / the Inclusion Team and Attendance Officers. Teachers / Administrators record their attendance in the registers on SIMS. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by the Attendance Officers are passed immediately to the SLT.
2. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and Attendance Officer daily.
3. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
4. In Autumn term 1, If a pupil's attendance falls to below 90 percent, a member of the Inclusion Team will speak to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The Attendance Officer also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary. By Autumn term 2 if attendance hasn't improved, someone from SLT / Inclusion will speak to the parents.
5. If attendance does not improve by Spring term 1, a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard and the child is deemed as persistently absent. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance. Parents are expected to work with the school to improve their child/ren's absence.
6. The pupil's attendance is monitored for four weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a formal AIMS meeting in school and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the Education Inclusion Officer (from GCC) who will then conduct a home visit.
7. If parents are still not engaging it may be necessary to follow the Schools Safeguarding Policy.
8. Attendance linked to each class and the whole school is displayed on fortnightly newsletters.
9. Attendance and late marks are included on the annual pupil's written report. Teacher discuss poor attendance within parents' meetings if required.

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Pupil Name Class

Pupil's Address.....

Date of first day of absence..... Date of return to school.....

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence

.....
.....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the Head Teacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £80 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of both Parent/Carer (s) making application:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename.....Surname.....

Address:.....

Email Address.....SignedDated.....

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Forename..... Surname.....

Address:.....

Email Address.....SignedDated.....

For school to complete and copy retained: AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED (please circle)

Signed..... Executive Head Teacher Date.....

Response Emailed to Parent(s) on

Attendance %

We politely remind parents that if issued a fine from the Local Authority, abuse in any form e.g. written or verbal towards school staff will not be tolerated.

Example of an Unauthorised Absence Response Letter

Dear [Parent/Carer Name],

[Pupil's Full Name and DOB] – **Absence Request During Term Time**

Thank you for your recent request for leave of absence during term time for [Pupil's Name], dated [insert date of request].

After careful consideration, I am writing to inform you that this request has been unauthorised, as it does not meet criteria for exceptional circumstances. As a result, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised on your child's attendance record.

Please note that if you are taking your child out of school for 5 days or more (over a 10 week period), following DfE guidance and in line with the Local Authority's Code of Conduct, a fine may be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence from school.

Important Information:

- The Penalty Notice is £160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first penalty notice issued within a rolling three-year period).
- A second penalty notice issued within a rolling three-year period is payable at £160 for the full duration of the payment period.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the matter may be escalated to the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could result in a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £1,000.
- There is no option for a third penalty notice to be issued within a rolling three-year period; a third offence will proceed immediately to the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could result in a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £2,500.

We understand that family time is important, but we must also stress the importance of regular school attendance and the legal responsibilities placed on parents to ensure their child attends school regularly.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school. Once a penalty notice has been issued, there is no right of appeal. If there are exceptional circumstances for the absence that we do not yet know about, please contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Burke

Executive Headteacher

GCC Attendance Guidance

The Local Authority has the power to prosecute parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school. The Local Authority receive all funds not the school itself.

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the schools' gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.' DfE guidance

Regular attendance ensures that pupils reach their full potential and are given access to new experiences and opportunities, helping them to get the most of their school experience including attainment, wellbeing and their wider life chances.

DfE Attendance Guidance

The guidance for Gloucestershire schools includes information on statutory and recommended practice for schools, school interventions to improve attendance and legal processes in relation to attendance of concern.

This considers changes in procedures for initiating legal procedures and replaces any guidance previously issued.

The DfE have published 'Guidance for local authorities and schools dealing with adults who have legal rights and responsibilities for children at their school'. The guidance outlines the responsibilities of the school and local authority when working with families when the parents have separated.

The new Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' applies from: 19 August 2024.

Example letter issued July 2024 and on both school websites:



Department
for Education

Dear parents / carers

New DfE statutory attendance guidance - 'Attendance Counts'

There has been growing national concern regarding declining school attendance rates across the UK. In response, the Department for Education has introduced new statutory guidance, effective from August 2024, aimed at reducing term-time holidays and unauthorised absences, and supporting families whose children are struggling to attend.

'Support First'

As the DfE notes, *'Improving attendance is everyone's business'*, and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.

The new 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance emphasises a 'Support First' ethos, and recognises that *'the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families... [It] is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.'*

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact someone from our inclusion team or the school office as soon as possible, so that barriers to attendance can be understood, and appropriate support can be put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

Formalising and intensifying the support

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with, we will work with partners, including the local authority, to formalise and intensify the support.

As part of the measures introduced, if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks, the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a 'Notice to Improve' notification sent and issued by the local authority (LA). Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon). Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence (where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place),
- arriving late after the register has closed,
- or a combination of these with holidays taken during term time

These 10 weeks can span different terms, academic years, and even different educational settings, such as transitions to secondary school or in-year school changes. For instance, if your child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in July (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, you may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences'. Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a Penalty Notice may then be issued by the LA to each parent/carers responsible for the child.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.

We recognise that these Penalty Notices may be unpopular with families, but it is important to inform you of these changes promptly.

Nationally, Headteachers are:

- not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and
- are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.

The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.

The new policy also states that all schools must consider issuing Penalty Notices if the criteria is met. This is a national statutory process and will be followed by all English state funded schools.

If you would also like more information, please visit the LA's public attendance pages [Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

The primary goal of these measures is to ensure that children do not miss out on their education. Every lesson is a crucial part of your child's learning journey, and frequent absences can significantly hinder their progress. Thank you for your continued cooperation in supporting your child's education.