

# GUSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

September 2023

Agreed by FGB on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Review Date: September 2024**



# GUSTON

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Vision**

*Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, branching into the world*

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever changing world.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Inclusion and SEND Information Report Policy
- Medical Care Policy

Links for relevant guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(May 2022\)](#)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(May 2022\)](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Feb 2023\)](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures \(Jan 2015\)](#)
- [Children Missing Education \(Sep 2016\)](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(Dec 2015\)](#)
- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

#### **Aims**

Guston Church of England Primary School believe full time school attendance is the right of every child. It hopes to promote this by providing a welcoming, safe, positive environment that celebrates diversity in all its forms. It is essential if a child is to make the most of the opportunities available to them and form positive relationships and attitudes to life-long learning. We are committed to meeting our responsibilities with regard to school attendance by:

- Building relationships with families through our open door policy
- Celebrating good attendance
- Completing appropriate training to ensure staff are all aware of their role in attendance

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and patterns in and reasons for absences are noted and acted upon
- Working with outside services to support staff, children and our families with attendance

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Kent County Council

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team (PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Support, PIAS) that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance through termly Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs).
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. The School's liaison Officer is Robert Vyskocil.
- Offers opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice through networking meetings.
- Advise on penalty notices

Interventions for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent, persistently absent (90% attendance), severely absent (50% attendance) will receive intervention from the local authority as detailed in Appendix 2.

### The governing board

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
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher, Deby Day, is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school level absence data 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
- Celebrating attendance across the school
- Making decisions on the issuing of penalty notices (appendix 2)

### The Senior Leadership Team

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance, is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Accessing appropriate external support for families

Email: [tracey.tee@guston.kent.sch.uk](mailto:tracey.tee@guston.kent.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01304 206847

### Class Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- Establishing a welcoming routine of meet and greet in classes
- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via the school information management system, SIMS, by register close at 8:45 am and 1:00 pm
- Highlighting any attendance patterns or concerns they have with the SLT

### Admin Staff

The school office is responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day to day basis
- Follow up calls for unreported absence
- Generating SIMS data on attendance for SLT monitoring meetings
- Maintaining in school registers for children that need to leave or be absent during the school day

### Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends every day on time, gates are open between at 8:30am and 8:45am.
- Ensuring any child arriving late is taken into school via the office so their attendance is recorded as a late and the child is safe.
- Calling the school or messaging via School Spider app to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of their illness until their return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- Letting an adult know anything that is worrying them at school
- Reporting any sickness they have at school
- Where they come in independently, coming in safely ready to learn

## **Recording attendance**

Attendance is recorded twice daily and held on an electronic register. It is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil as:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school gates open at 8:30am and pupils must arrive by 8:45am on each school day with registers and absence codes completed by 9:00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:05pm and close at 1:10pm. A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register to give an understanding of absence, see appendix 1.

The school operates First Day Calling when pupils are absent from school without reasons being known. Parents will be contacted by the office staff, on the numbers provided. In the absence of a response the school will work its way through available numbers in order of priority to ensure the safety of children. These calls do not have to be followed up in writing. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LEA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LEA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, only in exceptional circumstances.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

At Guston Church of England Primary School, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions to reach their full potential. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents and carers to contact the school at least two weeks in advance in writing, and these will be considered on an individual case basis.

Parents and carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw their children from school for holidays in term time. The school may however grant leave for a minimal period in very exceptional circumstances. The school will only authorise this absence if the attendance is over 95% and is not in either the months of September or May (unless this is leave linked to armed forces operational deployment).

Parents are asked to keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum. However, the unique community which the school serves is taken into account and it is recognised that military families may be absent during term time – for example when serving fathers are granted leave following return from postings overseas. It is also recognized that the cultural diversity of the school may require authorization of absence for religious observance outside of the normal school holiday periods.

Requests should be made in writing by email to Deby Day, Headteacher:

Email: [headteacher@guston.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@guston.kent.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01304 206847

### **Rewards for good attendance**

All classes receive an attendance certificate when all children have been in school for a whole week. The children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the

term. There is a special recognition and reward for children with 100 per cent attendance for the school year.

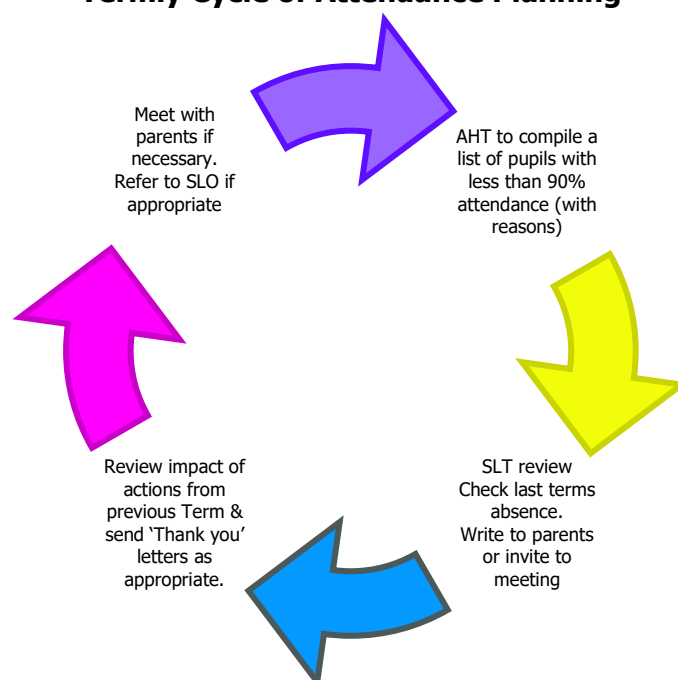
## Monitoring

The school tracks attendance in both groups and individuals on a termly basis and takes a range of actions:

- Proactively uses trends to impact attendance
- Children with  $\leq 95\%$  attendance are monitored by SLT. When absence is not due to exceptional authorised circumstances or illness, or where it occurs in two consecutive terms, parents are issued a letter to explain the impact of attendance on attainment. They are asked to minimise future absence and offered additional support if required.
- Persistent absence, defined by the government as  $\leq 90\%$  attendance, is highlighted to parents in writing. A meeting is arranged with a member of SLT to discuss ways to offer support including referral to outside services.
- Where persistent absence does not improve or parents the School Liaison Officer, Robert Vyskocil, is consulted and where necessary a front door referral made to attendance in accordance with the local authority policy.
- Severe absence, defined by the government as  $\leq 50\%$  attendance, will be supported through a joint approach with parents, school and the SLO.
- Shares the information with the Local Authority in termly meetings to ensure we are proactive in policy writing, aware of national data and using the local offer to impact change in pupils with persistent absence.

Due to the unique nature of the school, with high proportions of Nepalese military families, compassionate absence for illness or bereavement can have a huge impact on attendance; this is taken into consideration when deciding on appropriate action. Children will not be excused from school for holiday purposes except in the case of parental military deployment, or religious observance outside of the Christian calendar.

### Termly Cycle of Attendance Planning





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**Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Codes**

*Attendance Codes*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
D	Dual registered at another school
B	Off-site educational Activity
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience

*Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Authorised absence</i>	
C	Leave of absence granted by the school
H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
<i>Unauthorised absence</i>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

*Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances*

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

## Appendix 2

1. ANALYSE, IDENTIFY (ALL PUPILS)	2. FACILITATE SUPPORT (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)	3. FORMALISE SUPPORT (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)	4. LEGAL INTERVENTION (IDENTIFIED PUPILS)
<p><i>Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of absence at cohort and individual level.</i></p> <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b> Address individual cases of persistent absence rapidly using day to day processes including phone calls and letters. Request evidence for absences where appropriate.</p> <p>Use a <i>support first</i> approach focused on intensifying support rather than acceleration to punitive approaches as set out in the <a href="#">DfE Working together to improve school attendance</a> guidance.</p> <p><b>LA ROLE</b> No direct involvement from the PIAS Officer with the family required at this time. School will most likely be the lead for individual cases.</p>	<p><i>View absence as a key indicator to identify challenges in or outside school. Apply a contextual approach to school attendance.</i></p> <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b> Meet with family in school to listen and understand barriers to pupil's regular attendance. Consider home visit if family unable or will not access school site or other forms of communication prove unsuccessful.</p> <p>Consider district conversation with KCC's Open Access team to identify resources available to address barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Consider informal conversation with link PIAS Officer for advice on KCC or DfE guidance.</p> <p>Consider referral to Front Door where there is evidence and likelihood intensive <a href="#">support levels 3 or 4</a> may be met for Early Help or Social Care family assessments.</p> <p><b>LA ROLE</b> Facilitate <b>Targeting Support Meetings (TSM's)</b> held on a termly basis. Senior member of school staff to participate. No direct involvement from the PIAS Officer with the family required at this time.</p>	<p><i>Where unauthorised absence persists, and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with by parent(s).</i></p> <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b> Consider offering <b>parenting contract</b> which is regularly reviewed with clear actions and support from any partner agencies.</p> <p>Consider inviting link PIAS Officer to a <b>formal attendance meeting</b> in school with parent(s) and pupil (if age appropriate). Meeting chaired by senior member of school staff, with school being lead professional unless another agency has this role.</p> <p>Consider raising a <b>fixed penalty notice (FPN)</b> in line with KCC's <a href="#">Penalty Notice Code of Conduct</a> if case not complex, absence not severe, and if an FPN has not been issued in same academic year.</p> <p><b>LA ROLE</b> School's link PIAS Officer to join <b>formal attendance meeting</b> to provide advice and outline potential legal interventions measures which may be initiated. KCC Attendance Enforcement Team to issue <b>fixed penalty notice</b> to parent(s) if raised by school and criteria met in Code of Conduct.</p>	<p><i>Where all resources exhausted, and support not engaged with. Last resort process to try to improve attendance.</i></p> <p><b>SCHOOL ROLE</b> Consider making a request for <b>statutory attendance intervention</b> for persistent or severe absence which may lead to <b>attendance prosecution</b> in the Magistrates Court or an <b>education supervision order (ESO)</b> in the Family Court.</p> <p><b>LA ROLE</b> Link PIAS Officer to coordinate statutory attendance referral and arrange an <b>Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)</b> to assess most suitable pathway to try to improve the pupil's attendance.</p> <p>KCC Attendance Enforcement Team to apply to Family Court for the issuing of an <b>education supervision order (ESO)</b> or present case in Magistrates Court for prosecution under section 444(1), (1A) or (ZA) of the Education Act 1996.</p>