

**Gastrells Community Primary
School**

Attendance Policy

(see also Disability Equality Scheme)

Adopted January 2019
Review January 2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 The *Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007* set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. In Gloucestershire, penalty notices are issued solely by the local authority in accordance with the Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Compulsory School Age

- A child begins to be of statutory school age on the prescribed day which either falls on or follows their fifth birthday.
- The prescribed days are currently 31 August, 31 December and 31 March. This is the term following their 5th birthday.
- A child ceases to be of statutory school age on the school leaving date in the academic year in which they turn 16.
- The school leaving date is the last Friday in June.
- Raising the participation age does not affect the statutory school age.
- An academic year commences on 1 September and ends on 31 August.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 Children should be in school at 8.50am. Close of register will be at 9.05am (unless specific alternative arrangements are made) Children after this time will be marked as late.
- 3.2 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.3 When the child returns to school, communication is needed from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.4 Communication to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.5 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 The overall attendance that Gastrells would like is 100%. Ideally there should be no unauthorised absence. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. 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 to contact the school at least a week in advance

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.
- 5.3 Holidays During Term-Time are only authorised in exceptional circumstances, therefore the vast majority of requests will be refused and, if the holiday is taken anyway, this will constitute unauthorised absence which may result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent in respect of each absent child.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All 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 are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will appropriately reported.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.5 Gastrells will use the guidance from the LA and follow procedures
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2082769/attendance-guidance-for-schools-updated-311017.pdf>
- 9.6 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.