

Attendance Policy



Governor Committee Responsible:	Business Management (Pay Committee)	Staff Lead:	Lee Pajak
Status	Statutory	Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review	September 2023	Next Review Date	October 2024

This policy is based upon the latest guidance from GCC – September 2023

An exceptional educational experience for every child.

Aims and objectives

At Kingsway Primary School we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

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.

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

Legislation and guidance

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

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body is expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Our Link Governor for attendance is also our Safeguarding Governor. In addition to receiving termly reports to the full governing body, they will attend termly to monitor pupil attendance as well as the processes employed by the school

The headteacher 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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader (Mr Pajak – Headteacher; head@kingsway.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer (Mrs Mason: attendance@kingsway.gloucs.sch.uk or 01452 881800 is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with school staff eg pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office by 9.00am

School office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not authorised
- 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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at:

- Reception: 12.30pm and will be kept open until 12.40pm
- Years 1 and 2: 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm
- Years 3 – 6: 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.40pm

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

The school can be notified of absence via the school absence line, PA Connect App or the school office.

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.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

As a school we monitor ongoing punctuality by checking for persistent absence weekly. We will endeavor to work with families, offering support and guidance. If absence persists, an AIMS meeting will be arranged with the attendance officer and the headteacher, to discuss and implement actions between the parent/carer and school to improve attendance. An AIMS review will take place within a 4–6-week period to discuss progress. A parent contract will be put in place if agreed actions from AIMS are not progressing.

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.

Our preferred method for notification is the PA Connect App.

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 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as *a one-off life event that cannot be arranged during school holidays*.

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, where possible at least 7 days before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible on the school website link or from 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 the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, call the child(s) social worker if assigned and a welfare check by the police will be carried out. If a child has been absent from school for more than 10 days, they will be a CME (Child Missing in Education) and the local authority will be informed.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will (the same process applies as the first bullet point).

Returning following a period of absence

A Welcome Return

We understand that returning to school following an absence can cause some anxiety. We therefore take steps help pupils feel welcome, to reintegrate quickly and provide support to help them catch up on

missing work. Individual circumstances and needs will influence the process by which we support return, but typically it will include ensuring that the pupil is supported to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils. We also expect parents/carers to work with school to catch up on work that has been missed as every day matters.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Promoting Good Attendance

We know that feeling happy, safe and secure in school is supportive of high levels of attendance. As a school, we have a caring, safe and engaging culture where every child matters and feels safe. We ensure learning is engaging and accessible for all and that children feel motivated to attend every day. Through our school policies, we act swiftly and effectively to eradicate any forms of negative actions such as bullying or phobic behaviours. We also establish strong, well-understood and applied routines to each day so that children know what happen and what is expected of them. Where children face additional barriers, such as disadvantage, welfare issues or SEND, our school teams work in close partnership with parents/carers and additional agencies.

In addition to these cultural elements we have a number of incentives and rewards to celebrate good attendance, including, but not limited to:

- Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance
- Celebration Assemblies
- Recognising significant improvements of those with less than ideal attendance
- Offering Early Birds or breakfast club attendance
- Communicating via Dojo
- Making Home Visits to discuss options to secure better attendance
- Providing support from Learning Mentors with morning routines to improve promptness

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Monitor attendance of every child twice per day; monitor overall attendance for classes and for those who are below 90% weekly; and, report to governors termly on attendance across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether 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 governing board.

- 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers on a weekly basis and all members of the Senior Leadership Team, 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
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as breakfast club, pastoral support and early help.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Monitoring Attendance

The member of staff with responsibility for attendance will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss regularly with the class teacher and Headteacher. Where issues persist, the following will be initiated:

- **Stage 1:** Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with parent/carers.
- **Stage 2:** If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers and arrange a meeting with the parents. This is known as an Attendance Improvement Meeting (A.I.M)
- **Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will discuss the attendance concern with the Local Authority
- **Stage 4:** If the concerns persist the Headteacher will make a formal referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act.

Whilst 100% attendance is our aim, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Please do discuss any concerns with the school as soon as possible so that plans can be put in place to support families during this time; we will try to help in any way we can.

Legal sanctions

The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet).

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

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 ie lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

This policy is considered in conjunction with:

- KPS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Looked After Children Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.