

# Gossey Lane Academy



## Draft Attendance & Punctuality Policy Date September 2021

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Statutory Duty
4. Parental Responsibility and/or day to day care
5. Local Authority Responsibility
6. School Interventions for Managing Persistent Absenteeism
7. School Day/Punctuality
8. Reporting an Absence/First day Absence
9. Authorising Absences
10. Medical Notes and Supporting evidence
11. Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance
12. Monitoring attendance
13. Attendance Rewards
14. Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time
15. Deletion from Register
16. School Attendance Focused Target
17. Monitoring and Review
18. Relationships to Other Policies

## 1. Introduction

At **Gossey Lane Academy** we recognise that regular school attendance is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents and carers to ensure a regular pattern of attendance is maintained. We expect every pupil 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 will endeavour to offer support when barriers to learning have been identified and aim to safeguard your child in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality weekly, termly and annually. We encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of a positive attitude towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and to work alongside others

The Governors and Head Teacher, in partnership with parents and carers have a duty to promote full attendance at school under **legislation** and '**safeguarding**'

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives and policy are to:

- To emphasise the importance of and secure from pupils maximum attendance and promote punctuality to enable them to take full advantage of their education opportunities.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- To stress the need for home and the school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance and punctuality.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism;
- Promote effective partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) and other services and agencies and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.

## 3. Statutory Duty

Schools are responsible for recording pupils' attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The schools utilises a central administrative system – SIMS for this purpose.

#### **4. Parental Responsibility and/or day to day care.**

**Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.**

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

- (7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*
- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
  - (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of “parent”.

- (1) In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person-*
- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
  - (b) who has care of him,*
- except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.*

#### **Definition of a parent**

A parent means:

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

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

#### **5. Local Authority Responsibility**

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at schools, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend can be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, section 444 1A (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers in relation to issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim each Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

Your School recognises Birmingham City Council’s ‘Fast track Intervention Process’ and will implement prosecution where it is fair and equitable to do so.

## 6. School Interventions for Managing Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90%. All students whose attendance have fallen to this level or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the School's tracking procedure, and regular contact made with their parents/carers. Parents/carers will be given opportunities to work with school in improving their child's attendance.

There are a number of sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. In order to try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence. Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Birmingham City Council Code of Conduct.

Where intervention through the Birmingham City Council's 'Fast track Intervention Process' fails to bring about an improvement in attendance the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

## 7. School day and Punctuality

**Your School** day begins at **8.45am**.

Registers are open until **9.00am** – After this time parents will need to bring their children to the main reception.

Afternoon Registers are taken **12.45 KS1 and 1.30pm KS2**

School day ends at **3.20pm**

All pupils arriving **10 minutes** after the start of each session will be coded as authorised late (L code). At each registration session any child not present is marked as absent. If a child subsequently arrives after **9.20a.m.** the child is marked as unauthorised late (U code) unless a valid reason is supplied.

## 8. Reporting absences/First day absence

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the school by **9.20am** on the first day of their child's absence. If by **9.20am** on the first day of a child's absence the school has not been notified, the Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer. If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and a home visit may be undertaken. If no reason has been provided by the parent by the end of the second day, the school may send a letter of concern to the parent/carer and/or invite them into the school and/or may undertake a home visit. Parents are expected to contact school every day the pupil is absent. When no reason is provided for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## 9. Authorising Absences

There are two categories of absence:-

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

Only the Headteacher or Designated member of staff can approve absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

(i) 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. For example, if the child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

(ii) Unauthorised Absence

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

When completing the weekly absence report forms, teachers will record the relevant category of absence. Where the teacher is unsure of the category of absence the Headteacher will decide on the evidence provided. The decision will be made after referring to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE).

## **10. Medical Evidence and Supporting Evidence**

We ask that parents making medical appointments for their child, book them early or late in the day, so pupils can be in school for at least half the day.

The school fully supports pupil's welfare and medical conditions and if your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, we can arrange for a meeting with parents to discuss what additional support can be offered to help your child to access school however we cannot simply accept parental information without the appropriate medical evidence. Pupils with medical conditions should attend school as per normal unless the absence is supported by medical opinion.

- An appointment card or verification by the Doctor/Dentist/Hospital is required
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for any of these reasons, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment or register prior to the appointment.
- Medical certificates are required for absence greater than 5 days
- Parents must obtain a 'pupil pass' for their child if leaving school early to attend a planned appointment. This will provide parents with evidence that the school are aware of the absence in the event of being challenged.

There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless lessons missed cannot be repeated and "catching up" is never as good as the original learning experience.

The School recognises the need to support pupils during and after long term absence of any kind and will:

- i. Endeavour to provide work for pupils to be completed off-site where appropriate and medical evidence has been received.
- ii. Consider all strategies in partnership with Warwickshire Attendance Service and other agencies to encourage the return of pupils to school. This may include negotiated timetables and/or gradual re-integration.
- iii. Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within school in which pupils are welcomed back.

Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

## **11. Roles and Responsibilities in managing attendance and punctuality**

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- ensure regular school attendance
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually prepared for the school day
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and keep in regular contact with school
- contact the school promptly whenever a problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that our school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily, including recording pupils late
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes which provide a reason for the absence
- contact those families whose child's attendance has dropped below 95% on a half termly basis
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of absence to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher
- Invite parents/carers to meet in school and discuss attendance and/or punctuality with parents/carers.
- Involve outside agencies where and when appropriate (WAS, FCAF)
- publish and display attendance statistics / absence data

## **12. Monitoring attendance**

Pupils whose percentage of attendance falls below 95% will be reviewed by school staff and parents will be notified by letter. Where attendance continues to cause concern we will write a letter to parents and ask that evidence is provided to justify absences. We may arrange to meet with parents to discuss attendance.

Failure to make an acceptable improvement or where there is an immediate concern further intervention's will be considered.

If difficulties relating to absenteeism cannot be resolved through intervention at school level, then we may refer the pupil to Warwickshire Attendance Service for casework intervention or through the 'Fast track intervention process', inviting parents/carers to discuss their attendance issues. We will notify parents if we feel this intervention is needed.



### 13. Attendance Rewards

**Gossey Lane Academy** actively promotes and rewards pupils who achieve good and improved attendance and punctuality.

Each week the school identifies and celebrates the class with the highest attendance and publishes these successes in the weekly bulletin.

Certificates are awarded at the end of each term for good, excellent and 100% attendance. This is celebrated at the first whole-school assembly of each new term, with the exception of the summer term when it is celebrated in the final whole school assembly of the year. Certificates will be issued as follows: Bronze: 96% - 97% attendance. Silver: 98% - 99% attendance. Gold: 100% attendance.

### 14. Requests for Leave During Term Time

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

**Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional. If your child takes leave that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, it will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and legal action may be taken.**



- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued in accordance Birmingham City Councils Code of Conduct Each application for a Leave in term time will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

### **15. Deletion from Register**

Pupils will only be deleted from the register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended in the 2016 Pupil registration regulations.

**Gossey Lane Academy** will follow Birmingham City Council’s Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown.

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil’s school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. Failing to notify **Gossey lane office team** will result in a referral to Birmingham City Council’s Children Missing Education Service.

### **16. School Attendance Focused Target**

**Gossey Lanes** attendance target is 96%

In September 2015, the DfE carried out a review of the Persistent Absence (PA) levels. This review increased the level from 85% to 90% and updated the methodology for calculating PA. In previous years, a pupil had to amass a set number of absences (previously 57 sessions) before being deemed as PA. However a pupil is now deemed as PA if they miss 10% of their own individual sessions; meaning all pupils below 90% will be PA regardless of the time of year. The data listed as National % PA has been recalculated by the DfE to allow for comparative analysis

The Ofsted Framework now requires pupils within the bottom 10% attendance to be monitored and for schools to be aware of the reasons for their absence.

## **17. Monitoring and Review**

Achievement against **Gossey Lane Academy's** attendance targets will be reported upon to the Governing Body. The Headteacher together with the Strategic Lead will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Governing Body for improvement.

The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The absence rates will be reported on the Schools website.

## **18. Relationship to other Policies**

The Attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

- i. Guidance on admissions
- ii. Equality Statement
- iii. Keeping Children Safe in Education (otherwise known as safeguarding)
- iv. The Pastoral Policy

**At Gossey Lane Academy** we welcome the support from parents and families. We provide a safe and nurturing environment for your child to learn and make friends and parents are welcomed in school for a variety of events including special and celebration assemblies. In order for our children to feel safe and secure it is important that when visiting the school, parents and family members remain calm when speaking to staff and refrain from confrontational or aggressive behaviour as this can be unsettling. Appointments can be made with the Leadership team to discuss any concerns, any adults displaying behaviour which is deemed to be unacceptable will be asked to leave the school site.