Gillamoor CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Ratified by Governors: November 2026

Review Date: November 2027

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Gillamoor CE Primary School recognises that good attendance enables pupils to benefit from the full range of educational experiences on offer to achieve their potential and make good progress in their learning. Good attendance also promotes the establishment of healthy routines and patterns that equips pupils for their future. The school is vigilant in ascertaining the whereabouts of children absent from school and understands that this is part of its duty to promote the safety and welfare of all pupils. This policy outlines the procedures and strategies to fulfil our school aims and to provide a consistent approach which all staff can follow. It applies to all pupils in school.

Aims

- To enable pupils to benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and learning experiences to achieve their potential
- To encourage regular attendance and reduce unauthorised absence and lateness
- To provide a consistent approach to dealing with attendance issues.
- To support parents in understanding the importance of attendance.

Procedures

School day

The school gates open at 8:45 to welcome pupils to school. Children enter the classrooms immediately to start work on an early task. The gate closes promptly at 8:55. The end of the school day is 15:30.

Class Registers

Class teachers register the pupils in their class at 8:55am to 9.05am and 13:00 to 13.10pm using an electronic registration system. This calculates daily totals including authorised and unauthorised absences. Any pupil not in class during the register is marked absent. The school office amends this record as appropriate (see punctuality and absence).

Punctuality

Children arriving at school on a morning after the gate closes or after completion of the register in the afternoon are marked ‘L’ - Late (before registers closed) and their names are recorded by the school office giving reasons for their late arrival. Children arriving after 9:05am or 13.10pm are registered ‘U’ - Unauthorised absence - as the pupil arrives after the register has closed.

Absence

Parents are expected to notify the school before 8.30am on the first day of any absence. This information is recorded on the register using the appropriate codes. On completion of the electronic register the school office monitors all absences.
If no explanation for absence has been received, the school office or a member of the Safeguarding Team will contact the parent/carer by phone in the first instance. The reason for absence or lateness is entered into the individual child's record of attendance.
If the school office has been unable to contact parents/carers by 9.15am on the first day of absence then they will contact alternative contacts that are on file. If there was still no response a home visit may be carried out by a member of the Safeguarding Team to ascertain the reason for absence. Parents have a duty to provide more than one emergency contact for their child's records to assist in safeguarding our pupils

Illness

If a parent deems that their child is too ill to attend school, then parents must notify the school by 08.30am and share reasons for absence. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. The school follows NHS advice around infection control and asks that parents keep their child off school for the recommended time after the symptoms have stopped. This will be communicated to parents and carers at the time of reporting their child's absence.

Extended Illness Absence

If a pupil has been reported absent with illness lasting for 5 school days or more a member of the Safeguarding team will carry out a home visit or request a parent/carer attends school to ascertain any additional support which may be needed for the pupil. Should the pupil continue to be absent with illness then regular check-ins will continue to occur at a prearranged time.

Long Period Illness

Children who have been absent for a long period of time due to illness or medical procedures will be reintegrated to school on a phased basis. Arrangements for educational provision will be made following advice from external agencies.

Late Collections

Class Teachers bring children who are not collected promptly at the end of the day school office. A member of staff will supervise the child until collection, then record the time of departure and the reason given by the person collecting. Persistent late collection will result in a discussion around collection and ways to support.

Record keeping

Gillamoor CE Primary School maintains a record of all absence, punctuality and late collections on the electronic register and CPOMS. These records are reviewed on a weekly basis by the Safeguarding Team. The Headteacher may request to meet with parents and carers to discuss any support required to improve attendance, punctuality and/or collection.

Attendance & Punctuality

Improvement In cases where attendance is below 95% or punctuality is a concern, we may, where appropriate:

- Report to a parent when their child's attendance/punctuality is causing a concern verbally in the first instance. This is an opportunity to discuss any barriers to attending school.
- Issue a letter stating current attendance and offering an opportunity to discuss barriers to learning.
- Invite parents or carers to an Attendance Meeting to discuss these concerns with the Headteacher and Class Teacher.
- Discuss with parents whether a referral to the Early Help Service for further intervention and support would be beneficial. This can only be completed with parental consent.
- Submit a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine (see section 2) to the Local Authority, if thresholds have been met and the school deems it appropriate.

Gillamoor CE Primary school promotes attendance through a high-quality curriculum, exciting extra-curricular opportunities and an environment that supports every child to flourish.

Children Missing in Education

The school will comply with all the Local Authority procedures for children who are missing from Education and will take all steps to ascertain their whereabouts. Please also read the school's 'Children Missing in Education Policy' for additional information.

Exclusion Absence

Children who are absent due to exclusion will be provided with work to complete at home and the exclusion period will be kept to a minimum. Parents must agree to keep their child out of a public place during school hours. Failure to comply could result in a fine. Please see our exclusions policy for more details.

Fixed Penalty Notice Fines

Fixed Penalty Notice Fines may be issued by the Local Authority to adults with Parental Responsibility as an alternative to prosecution when a child has been unauthorised absent

from school for 10 or more sessions in any 10-week school period. The period of 10 weeks can span different terms or school years.

The following circumstances are normally considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed resulting in unauthorised absences
- Persistent absenteeism.

All Penalty Notice Fine referrals are checked by the Local Authority to ensure that the request meets the conditions of the Code of Conduct. The school's process for Penalty Notice Fine referrals is in line with the legal requirements placed on all state schools. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will need to be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Leave of Absence

The Headteacher reviews attendance and applications for Leave of Absence. All applications will be considered on an individual basis and the Headteacher can grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. The school recognises that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. The latest document from the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 states that the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of recreation to be exceptional circumstances.

As per the guidance set out in Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 a leave of absence must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil usually lives with. This should be done by completing a 'Pupil Leave of Absence in Term Time' form which is available from the school office. In some circumstances, the school understands that this

may not be possible, however, it is a parent's responsibility to ensure the school is notified as soon as possible.

Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday. If the Headteacher considers that leave of absence is to be granted it will be recorded as authorised. Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without permission of the school then a penalty notice will be issued if the threshold has been met. Unauthorised Leave of 10 or more sessions (5 or more school days) will qualify for a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine for each adult with Parental Responsibility, regardless of whether they travelled with the child. Each parent may be fined per child. The school may delete from the roll any pupil who fails to return within 20 school days of the agreed return date, unless there is good reason for continued absence, and only with the permission of the LA. School will make every effort to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil before deletion from the school roll.