

**BLAKENEY, PILLOWELL AND WALMORE  
HILL SCHOOLS' FEDERATION**



**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**REVIEWED: SEPT 2024**  
**APPROVED: SEPT 2024**  
**RENEWAL DUE: SEPT 2025**

## Aims and objectives

At Blakeney, Pillowell and Walmore Hill Schools 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

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** are 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
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

**The Executive 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 Senior Attendance Champion (Heads of School)** are responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention alongside the SENCO (Carly Roberts) and Family support worker (Ange Powell) 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** (*school administrators*) 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 Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Executive headteacher (or heads of school) 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 twice a day (am and pm)

**School administration/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 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 electronic 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
- 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 by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.50am** on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am but no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

### 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. Parents should call the school office directly to report an absence. Parents should not use Class Dojo or email to inform school of an absence as these methods are not always monitored daily. 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 (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

If a pupil is persistently late, school will:

- meet with parents to discuss our concerns and establish reasons for lateness
- offer support where possible and encourage parents/ carers to find ways to overcome reasons for lateness.

If an improvement is not seen following a meeting, a penalty notice may be issued under the GCC/National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

### **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.

Parents should complete a blue medical form (available from the office) and provide evidence of the medical appointment, e.g. a hospital letter.

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 *one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance*. Holidays will not be classed as an exceptional circumstance.

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 and where possible, at least **three weeks** before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or sporting event (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)

- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

## 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 make a home visit, call social workers (if involved with the family or concerns have been raised previously), call the police.
- 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 arrange a home visit, and may make a referral to social care if deemed that the child is at risk.

## Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through letters, reports and parent meetings
- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly (for identified children), monthly and termly 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 heads of school, class teachers, SENCO and our family support worker 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
- 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
- See appendix A for a flowchart showing the steps the schools will take when dealing with persistent absence
- See appendix B-E

## Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. 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 £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 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. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

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 i.e. lives with and looks after the child

## Appendix A

### Steps to Improve persistent absence

**90% attendance or 10 unauthorised sessions in 10 week period**

Send an initial informal letter to the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or are persistently absent explain our concerns and offer support. (1<sup>st</sup> letter – Appendix or 10 unauthorised letter appendix )



**Below 90% attendance and not improving since 1<sup>st</sup> letter.**

Send a further letter to the parent/ carer. (2<sup>nd</sup> letter – Appendix )



**Attendance continues to not improve**

Hold a meeting with the parent/ carer to discuss their child's attendance.



Create an informal parent contract which seeks to improve attendance, outlining expectations on behalf of the parent and the school.

(informal parent contract – Appendix )



Provide access to wider support services (e.g. Early Help, family support) to remove the barriers to attendance if necessary.



Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council. The initial stage of the legal process is the Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) followed by engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

(AIM plan – Appendices



## Appendix B

### Persistent lateness letter

Re: Childs name and Class/Year

Dear .....

Following routine register checks it has been noted that (child name) has been late on a number of occasions this (month/half term/term/delete or insert time period as most appropriate)

(child name) has arrived late after (insert school start time/register closure time) on xxxx occasions.

As a school we understand that on rare occasions, due to unforeseen circumstances, being late is unavoidable, however we are concerned that (child name) has been late on numerous occasions this (month/half term/term).

*I must advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

(Education Act 1996)

If there are any reasons making it difficult for (child name) to get to school on time please do contact (insert staff member, telephone number/email address) so we can discuss this and work together to best support (child name)

(If your school runs a breakfast club/walking bus/pick up service you may also want to add the details of your school offer here)

Alternatively, (class teacher/HOY/staff name) will continue to monitor (child name)'s attendance and punctuality and will invite you to attend a meeting in school should this pattern of lateness continue or further attendance concerns arise.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Evans  
Executive Headteacher

**Appendix C**  
**1<sup>st</sup> absence warning letter**

Parent Name & Address

Childs name

DOB

Dear

I have noticed that \*\*\*\*\*'s attendance has fallen below 95%. As stated in our school attendance policy any child's attendance which falls below 95% is closely monitored (\*\*\*\*\*'s attendance is currently \_\_\_%).

'We expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence' (Attendance Policy 2023).

I fully understand that there are lots of different illnesses around and some children are more susceptible than others and at this time, we are just monitoring. Please do not be alarmed by this letter, we genuinely care about our children and want to offer support to you, before attendance becomes a barrier to their learning.

As mentioned in our school policy, please find enclosed Attendance Leaflets.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns as I am more than happy to help.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix D

### 2<sup>nd</sup> absence warning letter

Parent Name & Address

Childs name

DOB

Dear

It has been brought to my attention that XXXX's attendance has dropped over the past few weeks. I know that the office has written to you to say that we are monitoring XXXXX's attendance, but unfortunately it has continued to fall. I also notice there are a number of unauthorised late marks (U) in the register. (amend as necessary)

'We expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence' (Attendance Policy 2023).

I would like to arrange a meeting with you, (and SENCO/ FSW amend as necessary). I feel it would be beneficial to discuss ways of supporting you in regard to *lateness and the medical issues XXXXX has been having*.

I cannot stress how important it is for XXXXXX to be in school, regularly and on time.

Please contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient day and time to meet.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix E

### 3<sup>rd</sup> letter invitation to an AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting)

Parent Name & Address

Childs name

DOB

Dear

It has been brought to my attention that XXXX's attendance has dropped over the past few weeks. I know that the office has written to you to say that we are monitoring XXXXX's attendance, but unfortunately it has continued to fall. I also notice there are a number of unauthorised late marks (U) in the register. (amend as necessary)

'We expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence' (Attendance Policy 2023).

I would like to arrange a meeting with you, (and SENCO/ FSW amend as necessary). I feel it would be beneficial to discuss ways of supporting you in regard to *lateness and the medical issues XXXXX has been having*.

I cannot stress how important it is for XXXXXX to be in school, regularly and on time.

Please contact the school office to arrange a mutually convenient day and time to meet.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

