

# Attendance Policy

## Gayton Junior School



<b>Manager:</b>	<b>Mrs J Hill</b>
<b>Date Adopted:</b>	<b>Autumn 2021</b>
<b>Date for review:</b>	<b>Autumn 2024</b>

## PRINCIPLES

Gayton Junior School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for them to realise their true potential. Working in collaboration with Ridgeway Infant School, we have adopted the principles of a joint policy and amended it only to suit our own school specific circumstances.

This policy aims to improve the attendance of pupils at Gayton and Ridgeway schools to ensure their continuity of education.

## STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at school where he or she is a registered pupil. Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making their children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. This can be regular attendance at school or alternative provision (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home). The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied to the validity and appropriateness of the explanation offered by the letter will the absence be authorised (see below).

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including pupils, parents, governors and staff.

Pupils will:

- Arrive between 8.45 and 8.55am.

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn;
- Notify the school as soon as possible if a child is unable to attend or will be late by writing to or telephoning the school;
- Ensure they arrive to collect their child on time at the end of the day or telephone the school office as soon as they are aware that they may be arriving late;
- arrange medical or dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible;
- Inform the school in advance of any known absences;
- Attend meetings to discuss their child's attendance and/or punctuality as appropriate.
- Work in partnership with the school to improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils.

Parents/carers whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication.

School will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and governors;
- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure;
- Promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials;
- Work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually and to improve the overall percentage of pupils at school;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils on issues relating to attendance and punctuality;
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence;
- Establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping;
- Challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality;
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks in addition to positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- Promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and with other services and agencies.

#### PROMOTING THE ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY OF PUPILS

The school will promote the benefits of good attendance and punctuality through:

- Whole school displays
- Assemblies
- Inter class competitions
- Awards and certificates for good attendance
- Awards as part of the Super Student Scheme for attitude and effort

#### ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

Attendance registers are taken twice a day. Morning registers open **at 8.55am** and close at **9.10am**. Pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where the school register will be amended to show their presence in school. Pupils who leave school part way through the day sign out at the school office. If they return the same day, they must sign back in.

Registers show whether a pupil is present, engaged in educational activity off-site, or absent.

#### APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OFF-SITE

The absence of pupils to take part in supervised educational activities outside the school but authorised by the school is recorded as 'approved educational activity'. This is the equivalent of 'present' for the purposes of the annual absence return and performance tables, but it should be clear that such pupils are off-site for health and safety reasons or in the event of an emergency.

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Dual registration arrangements with another educational establishment. Both institutions share responsibility for the pupil. Failure to attend either institution, as instructed, without good reason is unauthorised absence;
- Educational visits;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities

### RECORDING ABSENCE

Where a pupil is absent from school the school must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. By law, only the school can approve absence, not parents or carers. School staff need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person. It is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence.

### Authorised Absence

The school can authorise any absence but inappropriate use of authorised absence can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school has agreed on a satisfactory explanation.

### Categories of Absence

Family holidays during term time - Parents should not take pupils on holiday in term time. **All holidays taken in term time will be unauthorised.** Parents who wish to take their child on holiday still need to complete a Leave of Absence Request form obtainable from the school office (see Appendix A). We may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date. Where a pupil is absent from school and the school believes that the pupil may be on holiday, the attendance officers will check with other schools in the local area to check if there are siblings, and whether they are also absent from school. In the case that siblings are absent, this will be taken as evidence for the pupil being on holiday and will be processed as an unauthorised holiday.

Illness, medical and dental appointments - Where the school believes that a child is genuinely unwell the absence will be authorised. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is also recorded as authorised absence. If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or goes home because of illness, no absence will be recorded for that session. The school will keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school may consult the School Health Service, or the pupil's GP. A pupil receiving medical treatment on site will be marked as present.

Days of religious observance - This is any leave of absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. The school will be sensitive to such requests and parents are encouraged to give advance notice.

Exclusions - A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence will be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress. In the case of a permanent exclusion the pupil's name will be removed from the school roll on the first school day after the day on which:

- i. the independent appeal panel upholds the permanent exclusion; or
- ii. the independent appeal panel does not uphold the permanent exclusion, but does not direct the pupil's reinstatement; or
- iii. the prescribed period for lodging an appeal has expired and the parent has not lodged an appeal; or
- iv. the parent has, before the expiry of the prescribed period, advised the LA in writing that he does not intend to appeal.

In the meantime, the absence will be recorded as authorised. The school will set work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.

Traveller child when the family is travelling - To help ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that the school will not remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. While the Traveller is away, the school will hold the place open and record the absence as authorised.

Family bereavements – The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and has the discretion to authorise such absences.

Pupil caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers) - In a genuine crisis, the school can approve absence for a pupil to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made. However, the school will set a time limit for the absence and set some school work so the pupil does not fall far behind while at home. Furthermore, in accordance with the Children's Act 1989, the interests of the child are paramount and advice will be sought from Social Care.

Family prison visits – The school will authorise requests for absence which will enable a pupil to visit a parent in prison.

Special occasions – The school will consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence.

Public performances, including film or TV work - The Local Authority must licence a pupil to take part in a public performance. The school will authorise absence where participation has been agreed.

Lateness - The school discourage late arrival and will be alert to patterns of lateness which could provide grounds for prosecution. In order to facilitate a prompt start to the school day it is imperative that pupils are in school by 8.55am, therefore all pupils must arrive a few minutes before this. Any pupil arriving after 9.10 am will be recorded as late and as such will be required to undertake a 10 minute detention on the same day. Where pupils are late more than once in a week, parents will be notified by letter. For safety reasons, it is important that pupils who are late

report immediately to the school office for the attendance records to be amended. These records are invaluable in the event of an incident such as a fire. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, the school may keep registers open for a longer period.

#### Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Where the unauthorised absence appears to be a problem with a particular pupil, the school will:

- Write to parents to alert them to concerns regarding the attendance of a pupil;
- Invite parents to an attendance clinic in school to discuss any problems and to set targets to improve a pupil's attendance;
- Request support from the Education Welfare Service;
- The development of a parenting contract as a tool in identifying and focusing the problems behind non-attendance.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents should be aware that any type of absence will have a negative effect upon a child's progress at school and be reflected in their attendance record. All absences will be considered to be unauthorised until parents provide a reason to justify the absence that is accepted by the school. The school has a responsibility to report any unauthorised absences to the Local Authority who have powers to ensure that children attend school. Following government guidelines, parents and carers can be prosecuted for irregular attendance and unauthorised absences and fined up to a maximum of £2500 or 3 months' imprisonment. The Education Welfare Service now issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) following periods of unauthorised absence or truancy sweeps. The FPN is £60 if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid before 28 days from the date of issue. Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

## Promoting Good Attendance

### *Admission and Attendance Registers*

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) **must** be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

### *Contents of Admission Register*

The admission register contains the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents/carers and details of the school last attended.

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7 - unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided.

### *Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School*

Where the parent/carer of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

We will encourage good attendance by:

- Accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session within 10 minutes of the start of the session;
- Follow-up absence on the first day if children have not arrived by 9.00 a.m.
- Undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times;
- Recording attendance on pupil reports;
- Collecting data on attendance for the whole school and by year group and making this available to governors and parents/carers;
- Awarding good attendance with certificates for the class with the best weekly attendance;
- Award individual pupil with certificates annually for attendance of 100%, 99% and 98%.

### *Responding to non-attendance*

When a pupil fails to attend without a satisfactory explanation, we will:

- Contact the parent on the first day of absence by telephone if the child has not arrived by 9.00 a.m.;
- A home visit may be made if contact with a primary carer cannot be made;
- A letter will be sent to the parent/carers or a home visit may be made if there is no response and the unauthorised absence has exceeded 3 school days without any contact.

The return to school and the reintegration of a pupil who returns to school after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The HEADTEACHER or SEND Co-ordinator will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme. In collaboration with the parent, programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons, as appropriate.

### ATTENDANCE TRIGGER POINTS

ATTENDANCE	ACTION
<b>100%</b>	<b>GOLD</b> End of year certificate awarded in our Achievement Assembly
<b>99%</b>	<b>SILVER</b> End of year certificate awarded in our Achievement Assembly
<b>98%</b>	<b>BRONZE</b> End of year certificate awarded in our Achievement Assembly
<b>90-95%</b>	<b>Trigger point 1</b> – will result in an attendance letter from the school attendance officer to make parents aware of the situation
<b>85-89%</b>	<b>Trigger point 2</b> – An attendance letter will be sent, inviting parents to discuss attendance with the Headteacher and / or Learning Mentor
<b>Below 85%</b>	<b>Trigger point 3</b> - The Local Authority Education Welfare Officer will be informed. They will liaise with the parent and the school to improve attendance as quickly as possible.
<b>Other</b>	No holidays will be authorised in term time Pupils with 10 days unauthorised absence after a holiday will be taken off role.

### **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (See Policy for further details):-**

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school, the local authority or by the Secretary of State.

The law requires schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.



All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register

It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.



# APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

## Important Information For Parents/Carers

Please refer to the School Attendance Policy when requesting Leave of Absence - Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence unless there are explicit exceptional circumstances.

I wish to apply for leave of absence from school to be granted to:

Name of child: ..... Class/ Form Group: .....

Dates of proposed absence: From: ..... To: .....

Reason for Proposed Exceptional Circumstances

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Total days requested: .....

Parent(s) full Name(s) ..... Date of Birth .....

..... Date of Birth .....

Address: .....

Signature of Parent/Carer.....

Signature of Parent/Carer.....

**Consequences for parents taking children on Leave of Absence during term time which are NOT authorised by the school *MAY* result in a Penalty Notice of £120 *per parent per child* being issued by the Local Authority**

### For School Use Only

Attendance %

Interview Offered to Parent/Carer?

Yes/No

Date: .....

Authorised? Yes/No .....

Head Teacher

Date .....

Parent informed by letter?

Yes/No

Date: .....