

Garswood Primary School



A Policy for Attendance

Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Garswood Primary School and establish positive life habits necessary for future success.

Regular attendance also encourages your child to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing on life skills, they will also inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance and enable each child to realise his or her full potential

The school displays a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality and values its partnership with parents/carers to promote good attendance. This policy advocates close working with all local Schools and aims to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance within Garswood Primary School ensuring that every child matters.

AIMS:

To share the responsibility for promoting school attendance and punctuality amongst everyone at Garswood Primary School and the broader school community;

To develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of a school's life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum – staff particularly strive:

- i. to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning with and from others, i.e. have a positive attitude to life-long learning;
- ii. to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours.

This attendance policy and its implementation should encourage some pupils to attend school more regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.

- i. registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
- ii. setting attendance targets for individual pupils, the school and specific year groups (where applicable);
- iii. contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
- iv. regularly reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DFE as appropriate.

To monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National and Local Authority levels.

ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW:

It is a legal obligation of all parents/guardians/carers to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full time education.

The 1996 Education Act states;

'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'

SECTION 1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly and is punctual. They should also ensure that they are fully aware of the schools attendance policy and adhere to it.

Good attendance habits should be established from the time the child is on roll at Garswood Primary and Nursery School. This is especially important from Reception upwards, when missing school can have significant implications of the rates of progress children make, especially in phonics.

SECTION 2

INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE RATES AND PUNCTUALITY

There are many reasons why pupils miss school without permission as such; there is no one solution to the problem of absenteeism. Wherever possible the School works in supporting and implementing attendance initiatives which:

- Help children develop the habit of regular attendance including through providing a number of regular initiatives (termly certificates);
- Show parents clearly that unjustified absence will be recorded and challenged;
- Visit absentees, regardless of attendance levels, when deemed necessary;
- Minimise problems in KS1 by helping pupils transition from the Foundation Stage and when pupils transfer from KS2 to KS3.

The school has considered initiatives that are most appropriate and always takes into account a pupil's individual circumstances,

- Implementing first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge. It is hoped that this sends a clear signal to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up. Office staff are responsible for first day contact and the Headteacher is responsible for attendance overall;
- Encouraging regular attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled;
- Regular half termly register sweeps for pupils below 97% and below 92% and follow up with the support as appropriate;

- Interviews for target families following half termly sweep and a further period of monitoring to ensure attendance improves;
- Parent contracting system as needed;
- School attendance displays and celebrations (raising the profile of attendance);
- Letters and website information about the impact of poor attendance;
- 97%+ and 100% attendance raffles at the end of each half term for that term;
- 97%+ and 100% attendance certificates presented at a Celebration Assembly at the end of the year;
- Weekly class attendance data displayed in the hall including celebration of the successful highest class for attendance and highest house;
- Attendance texts sent to all parents each half term so that they can actively monitor their own child's attendance;
- Promoting attendance at parent meetings and discussions about individual attendance at parents' evenings

An Early Years Foundation Stage Attendance Agreement for Nursery Pupils where the school reserves the right to remove any child from roll – should attendance continue to be an issue following intervention.

The Headteacher encourages a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards authorised absence on the website, during induction and regular communications.

TYPES OF ATTENDANCE

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the School – this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Parents reporting absence should give the reason and date of return for the child. If this is unknown, regular contact should be made with the school. For periods of extended absence, the school will seek the advice of the school nurse and HPA (Health Protection Agency) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the Health Authority for the illness.

NB –Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation. Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and your child's past attendance record is taken into consideration. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters will be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made. Parents are asked to make appointments out of school hours where possible.

Absences for Head lice will not be authorised.

Even when pupils are engaged in Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the School needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or a real emergency. In the case of a pupil leaving school during a session and/or returning later, care must be taken to maintain the accuracy of who is known to be on site in the case of an emergency – for this reason an effective signing in and out system these purposes is also maintained.

Garswood Primary School may authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences or children with attendance below 90%, will require medical evidence)
- Medical appointment (Copy of appointment card to be seen and retained)
- Family bereavement
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health and safety. Religious observance, necessitating absence from school (limitations apply)
- A travelling child's absence
- Involvement in a public performance
- Approved sporting activity

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the School – this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

No absences are authorised by the Headteacher unless the pupil's past attendance record is taken into consideration.

Garswood Primary School will not authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping; not having uniform ready; hairdressers; etc)
- Leave of absence (which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school)
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed
- Special occasions, ie. birthdays
- Looking after siblings (This may also be considered a safeguarding risk due to the age of the children)
- Headlice
- Family holidays in term time

The Headteacher has the duty to consider the use of legal action in terms of court action to address incidences of poor attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Persistent Absentees are pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. At Garswood Primary School SLT will identify any pupil whose attendance falls below 90%.

All PAs are tracked and reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Guidance from the EWO is used to formulate support strategies and inform parents through letters and meetings as necessary on any attendance issue.

Punctuality and Lateness:

The School actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. The Office Staff record the time of arrival and reason for lateness on SIMS. Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents. All teachers must ensure that registers are completed electronically by 9.00am. in

the morning and 1.00pm. in the afternoon. A child will be recorded as late after 8.50am. and recorded as absent after 9.30am. The school completes a punctuality trawl regularly and targets families who are at risk. A monitoring period will then follow and if progress is not made then a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made

Holidays During Term Time

Parents and carers **do not have a right** to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.

In line with the **Department for Education's statutory guidance (2024)**, the Headteacher will not authorise any holidays during term time except in **exceptional circumstances**.

If someone chooses to take their child on holiday without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. This may lead to the issuing of a **fixed penalty notice**, subject to meeting the legal criteria.

As of September 2024, the penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

This reflects the school stance that –

- Every day of learning counts.
- Absences disrupt a child's education and make it harder for them to keep up with their peers.
- Good progress and understanding come from regular, punctual attendance at school.

Process

These aims will be achieved through the following process beginning with School and working in association with the Education Welfare Service when the service is called upon.

1. We will apply the attendance policy at all times. A target for Attendance is set at 97% and staff at Garswood School will do everything possible to work towards this target.
2. We will promote high attendance and punctuality through the School Newsletter and letters.
3. All staff will highlight the importance of high levels of attendance in curriculum subjects, Assemblies etc.
4. Ensure that ALL Parents know the importance of not taking children out of School except for Leave for Exceptional Circumstances. Special Leave will rarely be authorised with only supporting evidence. Only essential absence through illness will be looked on sympathetically.
5. Office Staff will ensure that the First Day response Process is adhered to. This means that any unreported absence will be chased up by a phone call home by the office

staff by 10.00am at the latest, to ensure the safety of child and promote high attendance at School.

6. After contact has been made on the first day of absence, if the Child continues to be absent for over one week, and the Parent does not inform School of the length of absence, the office staff will ring Parents on the 3rd day of absence for a follow up discussion.
7. We will ensure that a child coming into School after the register has closed at 9.30am is signed into School at the Office by the Parent ensuring the safety of the child.
8. The school will send out text messages on a termly basis to Parents of all children who have more than 10% lates in order to promote high levels of punctuality.
9. The school will send out information on a half termly basis to parents of all children to inform them of their child's attendance
10. The school will carry out regular register reviews and monitor attendance of less than 90%. If concern continues, the Family Support Worker will liaise with Parents to improve attendance, organising meetings as and when necessary.
11. We will ensure that Governors are kept up to date with attendance procedures, all concerns over absence and levels of attendance in relation to attendance targets set with the Local Authority.

Approved by Governors November 2020 and reviewed April 2025

(Appendix)

GARSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR LEAVE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

Should you have planned an absence from school such as a hospital stay for your child, kindly complete the information below for our records.

Please note that **ALL** holidays taken during term time will be unauthorised, unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Child's name:	Class:
Inclusive dates of absence	
From:	To:
Reason for absence during term time:	
Parent/Carer Signature:	Date:
For office use only:	
Current Attendance of pupil %	
Headteacher's response:	
Signed	
<i>Pamela Potter, Headteacher</i>	
A copy of this response will be forwarded to parents	