



Goostrey Community Primary School

## Attendance and Truancy Policy

Updated Spring 2026

To be reviewed Spring 2028

**Updated 03 26 – school will periodically analyse attendance across the school to better understand trends and possible actions to improve the % attending**

**At Goostrey Community Primary School we believe children only learn effectively when they attend school regularly. We believe it is important that children arrive and leave school on time, and that children should not attend school if they are unwell.**

### **School Hours:**

**Infants 8 45 AM – 3 15 PM (32.5 hours)**

**Juniors 8 50 AM - 3 25 PM (32 hours 55 minutes)**

Good school attendance is generally benchmarked at **95% or higher**, which aligns with the expected national standard. While 100% is the ideal goal, 95%–97% is considered good or expected, allowing for occasional illness. Attendance below 90% is classified as persistent absence (PA), indicating a serious concern

### **Impact of Attendance:**

- **95% Attendance:** Represents approximately 9½ days (2 weeks) of missed school, which can impact learning.
- **90% Attendance:** Represents 19 days (4 weeks) of missed school.
- **Persistent Absence:** Missing 10% or more of school is generally considered persistent absence, which significantly affects academic achievement.

### **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- Cheshire East Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education protocol
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

## 2. Statement of Intent

Our intent is to:

- encourage good attendance as an expectations of school life.
- cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.to ensure they follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that *the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*
- ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil
- maintain attendance registers in accordance with statutory requirements
- monitor requests for absence carefully
- report all authorised and unauthorised absences to parents on the yearly report form.
- monitor attendance carefully
- regularly report to governors regarding attendance targets and concerns

## 3. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

- **Absence:**
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed
  - Not attending the registered school for any reason
- **Authorised absence:**
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
  - An absence due to a family emergency
- **Unauthorised absence:**
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
  - Truancy. Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day
- **Persistent absence (PA):**
  - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason
- **Missing education**
  - Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

#### 4. Procedures

- Registration takes place at the start of each morning and afternoon session, via our Management Information System (SIMS)
- Parents must notify school **via the absence reporting line on the telephone system before 9:30 am, on each day of absence**. SIMS is updated with information provided.
- If no call is received, a smartphone message or email will be sent to parents, to inform them their child has not arrived at school and to ascertain the reason for absence. If, after 30 minutes, no response is received, a telephone call will be made to the registered emergency contact numbers held. If there is no response from the telephone calls, 2 members of staff will attend the home address. If no response is received from the home address, the matter will be reported to the police as a Safeguarding concern for a child missing in education.
- If a pupil arrives late, SIMS is updated recording number of minutes late. Register marks are L, up to 15 minutes after the start of the day. **An unauthorised late mark (U) 15 minutes after registers close.**
- Pupils going home ill or attending medical appointments, must sign out at the reception desk or at main entrance to infant department.
- Attendance data is used in completing statutory returns and monitoring reports. This exchange of data is covered by the Privacy Notice issued annually on the school website, and within annual Start of Year packs.
- Pupils must be added to the admission register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified by our admissions authority (Cheshire East) that the pupil will attend, either for the new intake Reception class, or for In-Year admissions.
- If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, school will endeavour to establish the reason for absence and mark the register accordingly. GCPS will follow up such absences promptly with the admissions team, and where appropriate, follow Cheshire East Child Missing Education protocols.

#### 5. Communication

- Information on attendance expectations, lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the school prospectus, on the website, at start of year meetings, at new parents' meetings and in annual start of year packs.
- Parents are expected to provide the school with accurate and up-to-date contact details, including more than one emergency contact number and update the school if their details change.
- Parents are asked to share with school any worries their child might have about coming to school. Sometimes little things can upset a child, which means they become unhappy. If staff are aware of issues, often these can be quickly resolved.
- School will not request medical certificates unnecessarily. Medical evidence may be requested in the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, clinic letters etc. rather than a doctor's note.
- Specific government advice regarding absence due to illness, including when a child may return to school can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-9-managing-specific-infectious-diseases>
- To prevent the spread of infection, children and adults who have suffered vomiting or diarrhoea should remain away from school for 48 hours after the last episode.

## **6. Concerns**

- If a child is regularly late for school or persistently absent (*Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason*) school will contact their parent/s to arrange a meeting to discuss concerns, and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- School holds a list of vulnerable pupils in school that staff have access to, and while we monitor all pupils' attendance, we are especially mindful of our vulnerable pupils' absences and take account of their individual circumstances.
- Registers are inspected at regular intervals, with feedback providing advice on individual situations.

## **7. Truancy and Unauthorised Absence**

- GCPS takes the regular attendance, continuity of learning and every child's safety, welfare and happiness, very seriously. Although it is rare for a child to truant, any concerns will receive immediate action.
- If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher will be notified and will contact the parent, either by phone, or by a home visit if possible. The Head may also liaise with the Attendance and Children Out of School Service| Children and Families| Cheshire East Council. Parents will be encouraged to bring their child to school to discuss reasons for not wanting to attend school, try to resolve problems, and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- In the event of not being able to talk to the parent, the Head will talk to the child concerned, to ascertain if there are any worries or problems in school causing non-attendance. If there are, then these will be discussed with the class teacher and an appropriate action plan agreed, which will be shared with parents/guardians.
- Where a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, for any reason, including truancy or unauthorised absence, the Education Support Team will be contacted.
- Where necessary, school may issue Fixed Penalty Notices, or Prosecution Notices, following Principles of Attendance guidance, as issued by The Education Support Team. Parents will be notified in writing in such circumstances. Failure to make payment will result in the Local Authority taking legal action for failure to ensure regular attendance at school under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

## **8. Requests for Absence**

- Requests for absence are dealt with in line with current legislation as set out in appendix 1.
- Parents requesting an absence in school time, must complete a request for absence form, available from reception or the school website. This is reviewed by the Headteacher, in line with LA guidelines. It may be necessary to discuss any request with the Headteacher so she can better understand why absence is needed and can then make a more informed decision. The headteacher (or deputy) have discretion to grant leave during term time and any decisions will be based on individual circumstances which may only be known and understood by the headteacher (or deputy).
- Applications will only be authorised where there are 'exceptional circumstance' time to pursue specialist training / events, sensitive family

issues, religious or cultural considerations, and parents will be informed of the decision.

- Requests for absence to attend 'taster days', external examinations etc for transition to secondary education will be granted, but pupils may be requested to complete work missed during breaks or other suitable times during the school day, to enable catch up.
- Unauthorised absence taken may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued (see Appendix 1)

### **9. Pupils with SEND and additional health needs related absences**

GCPS recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will agree procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult. We will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs in place. We school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

### **10. Child Employment and Entertainment**

- Regulations and legislation to safeguard children who have part time jobs, or who take part in entertainment or paid sporting activities, ensure that a child's education does not suffer & the child is not at risk of harm from participating in these activities.
- The Attendance and Children Out of School Service| Children and Families| Cheshire East Council oversees this legislation in Cheshire East and GCPS will work with this service to ensure their procedures are followed. Detailed information can be found on the following link:

[Children in entertainment, modelling and paid sport \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/children-in-entertainment-modelling-and-paid-sport)

### **11. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- We assess attendance on a regular basis and liaise with Education Support Team where necessary.
- We complete statutory absence returns to the DfE each term, and set attendance targets annually.
- We retain registers electronically in line with statutory requirements.

This policy is to be implemented with due regard to supporting policies which include Safeguarding, Health and Safety and in accordance with the Single Equality Scheme.

## Appendix 1

**The following is published every week in the school newsletter:**

□ The letter/application must explain the exceptional circumstance surrounding the request for the leave or absence—In some sensitive / personal cases it may be appropriate for the parent to explain the need for absence verbally with the headteacher.

**What will the school do then?**

□ The Head Teacher will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not the application will be declined—this will be on a case by case basis

○ Only the Headteacher (or the Deputy) has the power to approve leave of absence applications. When making the decision the protocols and criteria laid down in the school's attendance policy will be followed.

○ Our weekly newsletter informs parents that they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child has unauthorised absences in term time

□ You will receive a written response from the Headteacher (or the Deputy) letting you know if your application has been approved

□ If the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

**Penalty Notices may be issued for Term time leave:**

Penalty Notice fines may be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

**10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week period:** A Penalty Notice may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.

However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

**Per Parent/Per Child**

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

**First Offence**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

**Second Offence**

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at: £160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

**Third Offence**

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500

**Regular attendance is legally defined as attending every session of every day that a school is open. It means consistent, daily attendance rather than just "sufficiently frequent" attendance, with exceptions only for authorised absences like illness or prior school permission.**

**Impact of Attendance:**

**95% is the benchmark for good attendance, however 95% Attendance** represents approximately 2 weeks of missed school, which can impact learning. **90% Attendance:** Represents 19 days (4 weeks) of missed school. **Persistent Absence:** Missing 10% or more of school is generally considered persistent absence, which significantly affects academic achievement.

**IF A FAMILY GOES ON HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME SCHOOL WILL NOT PROVIDE ANY WORK FOR THE PUPILS. TIME OUT OF SCHOOL, FOR A HOLIDAY WILL RESULT IN THE CHILD/REN MISSING TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THEY MAY FIND IT CHALLENGING TO CATCH UP WITH THEIR PEERS ON THEIR RETURN.**

