



**Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary
School**

Attendance Policy

Approved by the Governing Body

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. V. J.', is written over a horizontal line.

Chair of Governors

Document Title	Attendance Policy
Description of Document	Policy
Origin (School/Local Authority)	Local Authority adapted to school
Version Date	24 th September 2024
Next Review Date	December 2027
Reviewed By	Full Governing Body

1. Introduction

1.1 Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

1.2 There is clear evidence of a link between good attendance at school and high levels of attainment. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.3 Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school and we will make every effort to support them to achieve this.

1.4 All staff at Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance. Staff will work together to provide an environment and culture in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

1.5 We understand the importance of building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

1.6 At Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School, we recognise that poor or uneven attendance can be a sign of wider issues in the lives of the children concerned and as such, our attendance monitoring procedures are interlinked with those for child protection and safeguarding.

1.7 This policy is based on current government, local authority guidance and statutory regulations (see Section 7). The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it.

What does an attendance percentage mean?

99% - 100%	We consider attendance to be excellent.
98%	We consider attendance to be very good.
96% - 97%	We consider attendance to be good.
95%	We consider attendance to be satisfactory.
94% and below	Attendance requires improvement and interventions will be made to support this.
90% and below	Attendance is inadequate and will be discussed and closely monitored by the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). This may result in the sanctions outlined later in this policy.

2. School Procedures

2.1 Registration

i) The school is required by law to maintain an attendance register. It is marked twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the codes detailed in Appendix 1.

ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.45am** and **1.00pm (for Reception and KS1)** and **1.15pm (lower KS2)** and **1.30pm (upper KS2)**. The register will be called by the class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The register will close 15 minutes afterwards. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be counted as **absent**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness found in Section 2.5.

2.2 Categorising Absence

i) The attendance register will be marked to show whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an off-site approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

ii) A child who is not present during registration will be categorised as 'unauthorised absence' unless leave has been authorised by the school in advance or where a reason for absence is known and is accepted by the school as legitimate.

iii) Where a reason for absence is given to the school at a later stage, the register will be amended (if required) so that the original entry and the amendment are distinguishable along with the reason for the amendment, the date it was made and who made it.

iv) Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activity, the school will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.3 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

i) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance where:

- a pupil is to be educated off site, for example to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority;

- a pupil is participating in an educational trip or visit authorised by the school;
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special event/occasion and permission has been granted by the Headteacher in advance. In authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case will be considered;

(b) in other **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted by the Headteacher for absence and where the parents/carers with whom the child normally resides have sought permission in advance;

(c) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(d) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);

(e) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(f) where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong;

(g) where the Local Authority have a duty to make travel arrangements for the purpose of facilitating the child's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty;

(h) where the pupil is of no fixed abode, their parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required them to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

(i) where the pupil has been excluded from the school and no alternative provision has been made;

(j) in other **very exceptional circumstances** where a request could not have been made in advance (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

ii) A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

iii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

iv) Where the school receives information from other sources that contradicts a parent's original reason for absence and indicates that a family holiday has been taken without following the correct procedures, a discrepancy letter may be issued. This letter will seek to confirm the reason for absence and may request evidence to support it. Where it transpires that a holiday had been taken without following the correct procedures then a penalty notice will be issued in accordance with the relevant sections of this policy.

2.4 Lateness and punctuality

- i) Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. If they arrive late it is both very disruptive to their own education and to that of others within their class. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon).
- ii) This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.
- iii) A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

2.5 Arriving Late or Leaving Early

- i) For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building at any time. Pupils arriving late should therefore *report to the school office to allow staff to register pupils and ascertain their lunchtime requirements*. **It is VITALLY important that all pupils & parents/carers arriving late follow this procedure**
- ii) Pupils who arrive late but before the register closes must report to the school office where their parents/carers must sign the pupil book and record the reason for their lateness.
- iii) For the same reason it is vitally important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) and/or returning to school later in the day complete the required information in the pupil book held in the school office.

2.6 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term-time unless they consider there to be exceptional circumstances.

- i) Requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on the appropriate form (see Appendix 2) by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides. Any further evidence supporting the application may be attached to the form. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval therefore if parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. All requests will be considered on an individual basis.
- ii) The school will **consider** authorising absences for:
 - Parents/carers in the armed forces returning from an overseas placement;
 - Parents/carers who are employed by the public services such as Police, Fire and Health whose holiday is rostered and changes are unable to be made;
 - Parents/carers who are employed and subject to a strict and un-negotiable annual leave rota and where evidence is provided from a Senior Manager of the Company to this effect;
 - Cultural/religious issues for families returning to their homeland;

- Weddings of an immediate family member – for the journey out and return plus a day for the ceremony (maximum 3 days including travel);
- Any other family circumstances that the Headteacher believes would benefit the whole family.

iii) Parents/carers who are self-employed will be assessed on an individual basis according to the nature of the self-employment.

iv) Requests for time off for the following reasons will **not** be authorised:

- Cheaper cost of a holiday
- Availability of the desired accommodation for a holiday
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Absent parent/grandparent taking the child on holiday
- A prolonged holiday overlapping with the beginning or end of term
- Holidays received as a gift

This list is not exhaustive.

v) The school will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving their decision as to whether the absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

vi) Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School will NOT authorise time off school during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations.

2.7 Legal Sanctions

The school will follow the new national framework for penalty notices, issued by the DfE, on issuing sanctions and has agreed to align expectations with other institutions in the Bury School's Partnership in order to make things clearer for parents and carers.

i) Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their children from school where children are of compulsory school age. This fine will take the form of a Penalty Notice.

ii) An immediate fixed penalty notice will be issued when ten or more unauthorised absence sessions have occurred (five whole days in total) within a rolling 10 week school period. The school will give a reminder/warning (if possible) about attendance when eight sessions (four whole days in total) have been recorded and then expect to see no further unauthorised absences.

iii) If issued with a Penalty Notice, **each** parents/carer must pay £80 within 21 days for **each** child. For example, two children with two parents/carers would amount to a £320 fine. The fine increases to £160 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay after this period may result in prosecution.

iv) If a fixed penalty notice has previously been issued to parents and carers, any second offence will issued with a further penalty notice. This will be for any further 10

sessions of unauthorised absence within the next three years. This fine will be the full £160 per parent per child paid within 28 days (no reduction for early payment).

v) Should a further third offence (or any further offences) occur within the three year period after the first then a penalty notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the magistrates court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500. Cases found guilty in magistrates court may show on a parent's future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

3. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

3.1 Attendance is given a very high profile at Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School and is regularly discussed and monitored.

3.2 Parents and carers will be regularly reminded about the importance of attendance in newsletters and parent forums.

3.3 This Attendance Policy will be shared with parents as required and will be available on the school website.

3.4 The school will contact parents where there is a concern regarding the level of attendance or lateness. This may result in support to improve as well as challenging the need and reasons.

4 Day to Day processes for managing attendance:

4.1 We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This information will give information about the amount of time missed and impact on pupil's learning.

4.2 Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who the school consider to be vulnerable or are persistently/ severely absent to discuss attendance and engage at school.

4.3 Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.

4.4 Make the necessary statutory data returns to the LA.

4.5 Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

Systems for managing absence and ensuring that children are safe include:

First-day calling

Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School has a system of 'first-day calling' in place. This means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent where no explanation for the absence has been received. This phone call will be made by 10.15am. The system helps to identify, at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parent's/carer's knowledge. Where it is not possible to make direct contact with parents/carers a message will be left on the parents/carers telephone(s). In certain circumstances a home visit will be made by school leaders. If contact has not been made with the parents/carers by the end of the week, or earlier if there are reasons for concern, a letter will be sent home asking the parents/carers to contact the school immediately.

Meetings with parents/carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence or where staff are particularly concerned the school will contact parents/carers to notify them of their concerns. A meeting may then be arranged to discuss the reasons for the absences. At the meeting plans should be put in place with the parents/carers and the pupil to resolve any difficulties, to provide appropriate support and to improve the attendance within a specified time limit. This would usually be no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If unauthorised absences continue following this time limit (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all) the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer

Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour means that the pupil will be potentially vulnerable to harm and will also not be receiving a full-time education. Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure that it does not happen. If, however a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents/carers immediately, inform the local police and establish a search team to locate the pupil.

5. Collection and analysis of data

- 5.1 The School Attendance secretary monitors attendance and late marks daily, highlighting immediate concerns to the Headteacher as required. Weekly reports are then produced for Headteacher detailing where children have reached thresholds that may require further action and any improving/declining trends.
- 5.2 Half termly attendance monitoring takes place for each child with a letter sent home detailing the percentage of attendance and highlighting how this is classified.
- 5.3 Letters are sent to parents where attendance levels fall below certain levels. At the Autumn half term this is at 85% and at Christmas this is at 90%, after this attendance is expected to be above 95%. If attendance does not improve then a meeting will take place with the Headteacher.
- 5.4 This data is presented at liaison meetings with the Education Welfare Officer to identify those parents who will be issued with a warning letter.
- 5.5 Attendance data is shared as part of the Headteacher's Reports for Governors.
- 5.6 Accurate attendance returns will be made to the Department for Education within the stipulated time frame.
- 5.7 Analysis of attendance and absence data regularly will 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.

5.8 Looking at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, will help the school develop strategies to address these patterns.

5.9 The school will keep the attendance register for three years after the date on which the last entry was made.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- monitoring attendance and punctuality figures for the whole school and comparing them;
to local and national data in order to understand any particular issues facing the school;
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- making sure staff receive adequate training for attendance;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation and review of the policy.

6.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead the school's work in promoting excellent attendance ensuring that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school;
- Ensure that up-to-date attendance data and attendance issues are highlighted when an identified point is reached or earlier where there are other concerns in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team;
- Ensure that support is put in place for families and children to deal with any attendance issues;
- Meet with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer/ School Attendance Support Officer and share information with them regarding any concerns about a pupil's attendance;
- Make information and reports on attendance readily available to staff and parents/carers;
- provide termly attendance figures to the Governing Body;
- Ensure that all staff responsible for recording and monitoring attendance have the appropriate training;
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Ensure that attendance figures required by external bodies are sent off within the relevant timescales.

6.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for completing attendance registers twice daily, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

6.4 The School Attendance secretary

The School Attendance secretary will:

- Scrutinise attendance data daily as registers are returned from classes, identifying any immediate action that needs to be taken and escalating as required;
- Collect and record messages from parents regarding absence and lateness;
- Initiate first day calling as necessary and taking appropriate action resulting from it;
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- Provide weekly reports to the Headteacher on absence and lateness highlighting where thresholds have been met;
- Maintain the school's electronic recording systems for attendance;
- Submit relevant attendance data to external bodies as directed by the Headteacher.

6.5 Parents/Carers

The prime responsibility for ensuring that children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child.) Parents/carers will be supported and encouraged by the school to achieve this.

Guildhall Feoffment Community Primary School expects parents/carers to:

- Ensure that their child attends the school every day the school is open to pupils;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return;
- Support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Understand that the school are unable to automatically agree requests for absence;
- Not condone unjustified absence from school;
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child;
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities.

In relation to absence parents will also be expected to:

- Notify the School on every day of their child's absence using the dedicated absence line. This phone call should be made by 9.30am; and parents should in contact school each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return;
- Provide written confirmation of periods of absence and the reason for the absence on their child's return to school if requested by the school. Where this notification is not received the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

6.6 Pupils

- Pupils should attend all of their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

- All pupils should be aware of the importance of attending the school every day the school is available. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

7. Reviewing the Policy

The school will review this policy every three years or sooner if:

- There are changes to Department for Education guidance or legislation
- The Local Authority updates its procedures for managing absence.
- Absence monitoring indicates that policy changes may be required to make it more effective.

The Headteacher will draft changes to the policy and present them to the Full Governing Body for approval.

8. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance 2024](#) 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

9. Links to Other Policies

This policy is linked to the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Evacuation Procedures.