

# Attendance Policy

## Great Ponton CE Primary School



Approved by:		Date: 09/12/2020
Last reviewed on:	December 2020	
Next review due by:	December 2022	

## Aims

At Great Ponton Primary School, we believe there is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement. We aim for every child to achieve their very best and attendance is a vital ingredient to help all pupils fulfill their potential. The school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attendance at school
- Setting a target of 97% attendance for all pupils at Great Ponton School
- Working in partnership with pupils, parents and the Attendance and Inclusion team

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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.

## School procedures

### 1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.30am and 8.55am on each school day (the school gates open at 8.30am).

### 2 Registration period:

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.05pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

### 3 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence and explain the reason for the absence by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 6). Parents are asked to contact the school office and leave a message, as directed, or preferably speak directly to a member of staff.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or the attendance of the child is so low (below 90%) that the EWO advises that medical evidence is required.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the attendance is very low (below 90%), the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified.

### 4 Medical or dental appointments

We encourage parents 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 and return to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Advance notice is required for authorising medical or dental absences. Parents are asked to contact the school via telephone, email or letter.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in the authorised and unauthorised absence section.

### 5 Collecting Pupils during the school day

If a pupil needs to be collected during the school day by a parent/carer, they need to be signed out of school at the school office, recording the time of collection and the reason for absence.

## **6 Lateness**

The school gates are closed at 8.55, after which time pupils are required to enter school via the main reception.

- If a child arrives after the registration period, but before 9.10am, he/she will be marked as Late (L)
- If a child arrives after 9.10am, this will be recorded as U for 'arrival after registration'.

Any child arriving late to school, should enter via the main reception with their parent (or the adult dropping them off), where staff will record the attendance before the pupils go to the classroom.

Concerns regarding the punctuality of pupils will be communicated to parents as necessary, so that we can discuss a way forward to help the punctuality to improve so the child does not miss out on important learning at school.

## **7 Following up absence (FIRST DAY CONTACT)**

The school will follow up all absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents are expected to inform the school regarding the reason for absence by 9.15am on the day of absence.

The school will contact, all parents who have not provided a reason for absence, by 9.30am.

If the school have still not received a reason for absence by 10.00am the office staff will telephone the parent(s) and attempt to make direct contact. If there is still no contact made by 10.30am, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher, as appropriate, so that further efforts to make direct contact with parents can be made.

If the school have still not received contact with parents regarding a reason for absence by 12.00pm, then the school may contact the Attendance and Inclusion team to discuss whether a home visit is required.

## **8 Reporting to parents**

The school reports attendance for the academic year so far to parents as part of the end of year reports in July each year and in spring term parents evenings. This will be reported as percentage for the whole year to date.

## **9 Known/long term medical conditions**

If a child has or develops a condition which is likely to impact upon their attendance at school, parents should contact the Head teacher. The Head teacher will arrange a meeting with the relevant staff and parents, and other agencies where appropriate, to ensure that child is supported to manage their condition at school.

Parents will be required to provide appropriate medical evidence. This approach will ensure that everyone is working together to ensure absences are minimised.

In some cases, if a condition is serious or long term, a care plan may be produced which formalises the agreed approach between all parties. The plan may include: the agreed approach to communication with parents; the suitability of a reduced timetable; the

involvement of health care professionals; the appropriateness of work being sent home or the need for medical home tuition.

If a child has been absent for 5 consecutive days, the school will contact parents to ensure that there is ongoing communication between home and school. In cases of long term absence, there should be ongoing weekly communication between school and parents. Details of this contact will be formally recorded on the child's file.

## 10 Dual Registration

Where a child is dual registered with another educational establishment for a defined period of time, the child's attendance at that school will be monitored and an agreed plan of communication with parents and the other educational establishments will be agreed.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The school encourages all parents/carers to limit any absence during term-time to the absolute minimum. Any absence will disrupt a child's routine, affect their learning and have a negative impact on progress at school.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in school procedures sections 3 and 4
- 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
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Certain educational activities that involve pupils developing their talents in curriculum areas such as music, drama and sport.

If a parent is requesting leave of absence during term time, they are expected to put the request in writing to the Head teacher, at least 4 weeks in advance, if possible. They must use the school's 'Request for Leave of Absence' form (see Appendix 1).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion.

The Head teacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless the request is considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'. "Exceptional circumstances" do not include having access to cheaper holidays or cheap travel arrangements. "Exceptional circumstances" include a short period of time for family bereavements, funerals and celebrations such as family weddings. It is unlikely that absences longer than 5 days will be authorised.

If a request for term-time absence is refused, the Head teacher will write to the parent to explain the decision and urge the parent/carer to re-consider the absence. The letter will include information that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be imposed if the absence occurs. See appendix 1 for request for leave of absence form.

## 2 Legal sanctions

Schools can request the Local Authority to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A Fixed Penalty equates to £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Head teacher, following the advice from Lincolnshire City Council. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, Lincolnshire City Council will decide whether to prosecute the parent, which may lead to Court proceedings.

## Missing Children

The school will follow the Runaway, Missing from Home or Care Policy guidelines from Lincolnshire Local Authority. This follows the guidance set out in “Children Missing from Education” DFE 2016. The Attendance policy links to the school policy on safeguarding.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

The school aims to promote, celebrate and reward good attendance by:

- Celebrating high attendance in each year group, each week in collective worship.
- Promoting high attendance each week in collective worship and reminding pupils “The more we attend school, the more we achieve”.
- Rewarding pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the summer term.
- Rewarding the class with the highest attendance in each year group at the end of each half term
- Working in partnership with parents, communicating regularly to encourage high attendance.
- Raising awareness with parents via school newsletters

## Attendance monitoring

The administrator and Headteacher monitor pupil absence on a daily basis. (see school procedures)

Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning or leave a message with the school if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see school procedures section 3). Parents are expected to notify the school regarding the length of absence or, if needed, each day a child is absent.

If a pupil’s absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil’s absence continues to rise, we will consider involving pastoral support or other appropriate support.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil’s individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. The school will

monitor the attendance of all pupils considered a persistent absentee and keep a record of their attendance.

If there are serious concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil, whether on a specific day or over a period of time, the Headteacher may be required to take action. The Headteacher may do a home visit and discuss a plan of action to improve attendance. If serious concerns remain, the Headteacher may follow the relevant legal procedures with reference to the documents outlined in Section 2.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level in line with the DfE school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

The school monitors attendance of all pupils each half term. Attendance of pupils is collected to track the attendance of different groups, including gender, SEND, Pupil premium and Ethnicity. Attendance is tracked each half term and a record kept for senior staff to analyse and implement any actions with pupils and parents as necessary.

Parents may be contacted by telephone or letter regarding concerns about attendance. The school expects parents to work together in partnership and meet with relevant staff at school to agree a way forward to improve attendance.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **1 The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the Head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **2 The Head teacher**

The Head teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head teacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **3 Class Teachers**

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office, both for morning and afternoon sessions

### **4 Administration Staff**

Administration staff are expected to:

- take calls from parents about absence, implement the 'First Day Contact' system (see school procedures paragraph 7), record attendance on the school system and inform the relevant staff.
- report concerns about attendance to SLT and follow the actions required regarding recording the absence, contacting parents and keeping key staff updated
- provide the data on attendance to report to Governors each term
- provide data on attendance for teachers' reports to parents

### **5 The Head teacher**

Is responsible for:

- Reviewing the Attendance Policy on an annual basis
- Working with all staff to implement the policy consistently

- Monitoring attendance alongside the Administrator
- Liaising with the SLT to keep up to date with attendance issues
- Reporting to the Governors each term as part of the Head teacher's Report
- Contacting/meeting with parents to discuss attendance issues (after any meetings and efforts at improving attendance or punctuality have been exhausted by the class teacher/pastoral mentor)

## **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by SLT and Governors

## **Inclusion**

Our school is an inclusive school. We aim to make all pupils feel included in all our activities. We try to make all our teaching fully inclusive. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a balanced, broadly-based curriculum. We have systems in place for early identification of barriers to their learning and participation so that they can engage in school activities with all other pupils. We acknowledge the need for high expectations and suitable targets for all children.

## ***Equality Statement***

At Great Ponton Primary School, we actively seek to encourage equity and equality through our teaching. As such, we seek to advance the equality of opportunity between people who share any of the following characteristic:

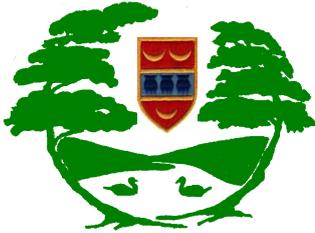
- gender;
- ethnicity;
- disability;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- age;
- civil partnerships;
- pregnancy or maternity.

The use of stereotypes under any of the above headings will always be challenged.

Appendix 1

# Great Ponton Church of England School

Headteacher: Mr Keith Leader



Mill Lane  
Great Ponton  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG33 5DT

Tel / fax. 01476 530306

Email. [Keith.Leader@greatponton.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Keith.Leader@greatponton.lincs.sch.uk)

Web address: [www.greatpontonprimary.co.uk](http://www.greatpontonprimary.co.uk)

Date: .....

Dear Mr Leader

## REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE – ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-20

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence for my child, ..... from ..... to ..... for ..... day(s) authorised absence.

The reasons for this request during school term time are:

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

(please note the school can only consider exceptional circumstances for requests of more than 5 days off during the school year – please see the attendance protocol guidance for more information)

Signed: ..... Parent/Carer

Date: .....