

# Witton Gilbert Primary School



## Attendance Policy

<b>Policy Agreed</b>	October 2021
<b>Review Due</b>	October 2022
<b>Attendance Officer</b>	Mrs Katherine Curry (DHT)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Paula Nelson
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mrs Michelle Harrison

## Contents

1. Aims .....	2
2. Legislation and guidance .....	2
3. Roles and responsibilities .....	2
4. Recording attendance.....	3
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence .....	5
6. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	6
7. Attendance monitoring.....	6
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	7
9. Links with other policies.....	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes .....	7

---

### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good 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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. 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:

- 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.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Behaviour and Safety Committee is responsible for reviewing the monitoring of pupil attendance and termly data is shared with the Full Governing Body through the Headteacher's report to governors.

## 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## 3.3 The attendance officer

In our school, the Deputy Headteacher acts as school attendance officer. The Deputy Headteacher:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## 3.4 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.

## 3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They will also contact parents if no reason for absence is given. School office staff will liaise with the Deputy Headteacher regarding attendance and alert the school leadership team to any concerns.

# 4. Recording attendance

## 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken when children return from lunchtime.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

A pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents must contact the school office on 0191 3710424 or email school at [wittongilbert@durhamlearning.net](mailto:wittongilbert@durhamlearning.net) (Class Dojo should NOT be used to message teachers about absence),

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorized, as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should inform the school office and bring a copy of the appointment letter/card to the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. The school office will record reasons for lateness
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Should a pupil's punctuality become a regular issue, parents/carers will be notified in writing in the first instance. In the case of older children who walk to school alone, a text message may also be sent to parents when the pupil is late.

If these measures do not lead to improved punctuality, then parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss ways to support.

## 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone. If no response, a text message or email will be sent requesting that the parent/carer contact school. If there is still no response, a phone call to a pupil's other contacts may be made to request they ask the parent/carer to contact school.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

Pupils' attendance will be reported to parents termly, either through parents meetings or on the termly written report.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence significantly impacts pupils' academic achievement as well as having a negative impact on their social and emotional wellbeing.

The school will work with parents/carers where there are issues with persistent absence. A letter will be sent initially, alerting parents/carers that persistent absence is a concern. Attendance will then be monitored.

If there is no improvement, a meeting will be arranged with parents/carers and either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss concerns and provide school support where possible. Parents/carers will be asked to agree an attendance contract at this meeting. Attendance will then be closely monitored.

Referrals may be made, with parental consent, to other agencies such as Early Help if parents/carers need further support.

A referral may be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team if the support offered does not reduce persistent absence.

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school adopts a range of strategies for promoting good attendance. The school:

- Builds respectful relationships with staff, pupils and families to promote engagement with school and attendance
- Delivers clear messages about expectations for attendance to pupils
- Regularly communicates expectations for attendance and punctuality through regular channels of communication with parents/carers, such as newsletters
- Celebrates good attendance in the weekly school celebration assembly. The class with the highest attendance display an attendance banner on their class door. Stickers are awarded for classes with 100% attendance
- Presents termly attendance certificates (bronze, silver and gold) in assemblies
- Reports termly pupil attendance to parents/carers
- Monitors whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns and impact of interventions. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services that are working with families
- Develops support for pupils with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health issues or SEND
- Liaises with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance

We ask that parents/carers:

- Treat staff with respect
- Actively support the work of the school
- Call on staff for help when they need it
- Communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The Deputy Headteacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly, monthly and termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving the LA Attendance Team.

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.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published

alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school collects and stores attendance data to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher, with the Behaviour and Safety Committee. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or

		approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence



<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
----------	----------------------------	---

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day