

# Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School

## Attendance Policy



## Attendance Policy

Policy written and agreed: January 2015

To be reviewed: Nov 2025

Policy reviewed: Nov 2023

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in Sept 2013 which state:

**‘Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’**

GHF School would interpret “exceptional” as being a one-off, unique situation. In this context it would be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but requests for authorised absence will be refused unless the circumstances are exceptional.

GHF School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement and attendance. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our School will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our School will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To monitor attendance and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism
- To acknowledge and celebrate a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the School
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To work effectively with other services and agencies to support these objectives.

### **Information**

This identifies the information held by the school and will be considered when dealing with attendance and punctuality issues:

- Start and finishing times of registration: our doors open at 8.40am and registration opens at 8:50am. A child arriving after 9.20am will be marked as Late. A child arriving after 9:30am will be marked as 'late after the register has closed'.
- Guidance for staff on the accurate completion of registers.
- The importance of punctuality and the response to lateness. If a child arrives at school between 8:50-9am they will have to enter school through the main office and a record will be kept. If they arrive after 9.20 they will be marked late. (Less than 90% punctuality will be followed up.)
- If a child is absent, parents must phone the school office on 01476 565800 by 9:15am on that day. If they phone before school hours, they can leave a message on the answerphone. The message must include the reason for absence. If a child is absent from school and parents have not phoned the office, the school office will phone home. If the first contact does not answer, the next contact on the list will be contacted.
- Daily contact between parents and school when a child is absent.
- In line with Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence due to illness is authorised.
- If a parent wants to request an absence due to an exceptional circumstance for their child, they must contact the office and fill out a form detailing the reason. This will then be decided by the Headteacher whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Exceptional circumstances include: a family funeral or an immediate family wedding (maximum of 3 days if travelling abroad) and other circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion.

- Routine dental and doctor appointments must be made out of school hours but hospital and emergency doctor appointment will be authorised. You may be requested to provide evidence of these appointments.
- Children should not leave school early unless they have an emergency appointment or there is an exceptional circumstance. You may be requested to provide evidence of these appointments.
- Clear guidance to parents that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.
- Referral routes with roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems (Parents of pupils with attendance below 95% will be monitored and/or contacted. This is on an individual case basis dependent on the circumstances, for example, a child may have had an operation and need to have 2 weeks absence.
- Monitoring progress towards targets. Evaluation of the impact of the Attendance Policy.
- The inclusion of attendance information in School documentation, e.g. the website, reports, newsletters, home-school agreements.
- Annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance.
- The Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date.
- If a parent has concerns about their child's attendance or would like to discuss any matters further, they should contact the school office to make an appointment to see the Headteacher or the Attendance Champion (Sarah Garland).

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to set realistic targets; these targets may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

### **School Target**

Our school target for attendance is set at 98%

### **Persistent Absence Definition**

Attendance below 90% is defined by the DfE as persistent absence. However, pupils are now classed as persistently absent based upon their individual absence level rather than a comparison to a national threshold. The calculation for persistent absence is represented as:

$$\frac{\text{A pupil's individual overall absence}}{\text{A pupil's individual possible sessions}} \times 100 \geq 10.0$$

The DfE guidance explains that if a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, he/she will be classified as a persistent absentee.

### **Definition Of "Parent"**

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

When evaluating success, the school will consider whether:

- Patterns and trends in the school's attendance and pupils' punctuality are improved

- Parental response to absence has improved
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance by celebrating good attendance within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and aware of the attendance procedures operating within school
- Parents and Governors are made aware of the current law on attendance
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies or PSHE lessons.

## **Monitoring**

- Attendance is monitored daily. A report is sent to the HT and Attendance Champion (Sarah Garland – Assistant Headteacher) each day to monitor individual children.
- Parents will be routinely contacted if attendance falls below 90% in Autumn term and below 95% from Spring term onwards.
- Every half term, the Attendance Champion monitors all children's attendance across school and children who are less than 95% are monitored and may be contacted via a letter (Letter 1 - see appendix). This is continually monitored every half term and each child is looked at individually. This can depend on the term: in the Autumn term, a letter will only be sent if attendance is below 90% as this will have only been one bout of illness. From the Spring term, anyone with less than 95% will be contacted.
- If the attendance does not improve, a second letter is sent (Letter 2 - see appendix) inviting the parents to meet with the Attendance Champion to discuss any issues and putting actions in place e.g. referred to Early Help, complete an EBSA referral.
- For pupils that further drop below 90%, parents will be requested to meet with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors to attend a SAP (School Attendance Panel). This is a more formal meeting and actions are agreed from it. (Letter 3 – see appendix).
- If attendance continues to fall and is below 90%, a formal letter will be sent (Letter 4 – see appendix) explaining to the parent that it needs to improve or a fine could be issued.
- Finally, legal proceedings will begin (letter 5) if a child's attendance is below 90% and is continually dropping.
- A 'well done' letter is sent to all children who have attended school 100% at the end of each main term (3 times per year).
- A 'well done' letter (nearly 100% attendance) is sent to all children who have attended school at least 99% at the end of the year.
- A 'well done' letter is sent to all children who have attended school 100% of the time at the end of the year.
- A 'well done' on improvement letter is also sent when positive impact is recorded following identified low attendance.

## **Children on part-time timetables**

In some circumstances, a reduced timetable may be suitable for individual pupils. These are implemented after discussion and agreement with home and school. All reduced timetables are submitted to Lincolnshire County Council with a review date of 4 weeks. These children are monitored separately and their attendance is tracked pro rata.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Class teachers take the register each session.
- The School Office contact parents/carers if children are absent without prior notification.
- The Headteacher and Governing Body monitor patterns and trends over time.
- The Headteacher is responsible for decisions about any leave of absence requested for exceptional circumstances during term time.

**Good Practice**

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Reporting missing children and changes in roll to the LA
- Rewarding and celebrating good and improving attendance through individual letters saying well done and parental conversations.

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole School.

**Any unauthorised absence is damaging to a child's education as well as reflecting badly on the School. It also gives children the wrong messages about the importance of education which may lead to problems later in schooling. Good attendance and punctuality are important values for later in life.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

# Gonerby Hill Foot Church of England Primary School

## APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

If you consider you have to take a holiday in term time, and that you have exceptional circumstances, please complete this form and return to the school at least 10 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name ..... Class .....

Home Address .....

First day of absence ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of days missed .....

Reasons for absence (please make it very clear why there are exceptional circumstances)

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

***I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Lincolnshire Education and Welfare Service will be notified if the holiday is taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60.***

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

(Please ensure you are giving at least 10 days' notice of the proposed absence)

✂.....

Pupil Name ..... Class .....

☐ AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

☐ UNAUTHORISED: Your request for a leave of absence during term time has not been authorised because:

.....

Headteacher signature .....

DATE

Dear Parents

### Attendance Letter

I am pleased to confirm that following a review of the school attendance data, your child's attendance has increased since my letter last term.

It is vital that all pupils' attendance at our school should be at least 95%. This is important because your child's progress can be seriously affected and it is your legal responsibility to make sure that they are in school.

I would like to thank you for your help in improving your child's attendance this term, please keep it up.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Watson

Headteacher

DATE

To the Parents of

Dear Parents

Annual Attendance Letter

Following a review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance has been less than 95%.

I realise that there may be a good reason for NAME's absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils' attendance at our school should be at least 95%. This is important because NAME's progress can be seriously affected and it is your legal responsibility to make sure that HE/SHE is in school.

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter and if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Garland

Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Champion



DATE

To the Parents of

Dear Parents

Annual Attendance Letter

Following a further review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance is still under 95% and has not improved since my last letter.

I realise that there may be a good reason for NAME's absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils' attendance at our school should be at least 95%. This is important because NAME's progress can be seriously affected and it is your legal responsibility to make sure that HE/SHE is in school.

I would like to meet with you to discuss this further. Please can you come into school on ???. If this time and date is not convenient, contact the school office to rearrange a more convenient time to come in or a telephone call.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Garland

Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Champion

DATE

To the Parents of

Dear Parents

Annual Attendance Letter

Following a further review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance has now dropped below 90% and has continued to decrease since we met.

As we have already met and discussed any issues, put actions in place and your child's attendance has still not improved, I would like you to meet with our Headteacher and Chair of Governors for a School Attendance Panel to discuss actions moving forward.

Please can you come into school on ???. If this time and date is not convenient, contact the school office to rearrange a more convenient time to come in.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Garland

Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Champion

# FORMAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Ref:

Date

Dear

**IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**REGISTERED PUPIL AT:**

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason.

During the period , was absent from school on out of a possible half-day sessions and no valid reasons have been provided. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance and I attach for your information, a copy of the Pupil Absence Record Sheet.

**Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure their child receives suitable efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or education otherwise. Section 444 (1)(a) of the same Act states that where a parent of a child who knowingly and without reasonable justification fails to ensure regular attendance of a registered pupil at that school, the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence against that Section. The Local Education Authority may, where necessary, institute legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under this section of the Education Act 1996 against those parents concerned. Alternatively Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Education Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.**

Please contact the school to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Garland

Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Champion