



# Pupil Attendance Policy

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**Policy Category:** School

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### 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence.
- Achieving our whole school target of 95% including addressing 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 pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Finlay Community School, we believe that all pupils have the right to a full-time education regardless of age, aptitude and ability. Being **'At school. On time. Every day'** is the schools motto for promoting to pupils to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Finlay Community School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor the regular attendance of all pupils, acknowledging that irregular attendance can seriously disrupt continuity of learning, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the pupil's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Finlay Community School provides a secure, challenging and happy learning environment for all pupils where they are respected and valued. We want every pupil to be motivated to reach his or her full potential, by encouraging pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.

We believe that good habits need to be instilled at a young age as good attendance and punctuality are central to achieving potential. Pupils cannot participate if they are not at school therefore; miss out on vital learning experiences. It is also unsettling for pupils if they arrive late and can cause disruption to other pupils and the class teacher.

The school community consists of parents, pupils and staff and we must all take responsibility for achieving excellent attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and we are aware of the need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems, which can be used whenever there are concerns over a particular pupil.

Whole school Attendance Targets		Attendance Achieved
2015/2016	95%	96.1%
2016/2017	95%	96%
2017/2018	95%	95%
2018/2019	95%	96.12%
2019/2020	95%	96.30%
2020/2021	95%	95.42%

#### Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

School Year	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
2015/2016	3.4%	0.73%
2016/2017	3.13%	0.86%
2017/2018	3.48%	1.53%
2018/2019	3.62%	0.26%
2019/2020	0.65%	3.04%
2020/2021	4.32	0.22%

## 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:

- [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.

### 3. School procedures

Registers marked once at the beginning of the morning and during the afternoon session. The school register is marked electronically directly onto SIMS, in the case of a fire class IPADS will be used

#### 3.1 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
- 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved 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 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:45 KS1 and 1:15 pm KS2 and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

#### 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). *You can notify school of your child's absence by ringing 01452 530310 option 1 or email [admin@finlay.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@finlay.gloucs.sch.uk).* Your message is recorded on SIMS and retained on file for future records.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, 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. Inform your child's class teacher, school office or email school [admin@finaly.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@finaly.gloucs.sch.uk)

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 section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason.

After a 4 week period, if no improvement is evident; the Family Services Manager will contact the parent/carer to arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher and safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

Parents of children with unexplained absence will be spoken to by their Class Teacher requesting a reason for non-attendance at school. If attendance does not show improvement after 2 weeks, school will contact parents to organise a meeting to discuss support they may need.

If the parent/s does not attend the meetings above, make contact with the school or if the attendance of the pupil does not improve, formal proceedings can be instigated by the Local Authority. Attendance is report to parents annually in the written end-of-year report.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 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'.

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 headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Examples of unauthorised absence:
- such as when term-time holiday will not be approved
- Information about targeting unauthorised attendance – how the school identifies pupils and families where attendance is poor, and what action you take (such as meetings, letters, closer monitoring)
- However, absences for shopping, visiting relatives, day trips and birthdays will be classed as unauthorised even if a letter is provided.
- Flexi-schooling requests
- Any decisions in this regard should be made with the needs of the child at the centre of the decision making. Parents and school will working together in the best interest of the child. . Guidance for parents and carers may be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/educationand-learning/home-education/>

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

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

### **4.3 Children missing education**

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to the Gloucestershire County Council, Education Performance and Inclusion Team.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks'.

CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

It is the responsibility of the Education Performance and Inclusion team, on behalf of the Local Authority (LA), to:-

- Collate information on all reported cases of CME of statutory school aged children in Gloucestershire maintained schools, academies, free schools, alternative provision academies and Alternative Provision Schools (APS).
- Liaise with partner agencies and other LAs and schools across Britain to track pupils who may be missing education.
- Ensure each child missing education is offered full time education within 2 weeks of the date the LA was informed.

Alerting the LA that a child may be missing education.

Any professional should alert the LA when they suspect that a child might be missing from education. To make this process as easy as possible, a referral should be sent to:

Fair Access Team  
 Access to education service  
 Shire Hall,  
 Westgate Street,  
 Gloucester GL1 2TP

Tel 01452 328774

missingpupils@gloucestershire.gov.uk

## **5. Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school newsletter and website communicates the whole school attendance percentage for termly attendance.

We hold weekly attendance celebrations in class where each class's attendance is shared and the winning class is awarded the attendance trophy.

We work closely with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues and acknowledging positive improvements.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

School office staff check daily am and pm register; they contact the parent/carer if the pupil's absence is unexplained.

The Family Services manager monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

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 continue to rise, we will consider involving our Family Services Manager.

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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

We use SIMS to track the attendance of individual pupils to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board 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.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

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

### **7.3 The attendance officer**

Family Services Manager:

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

### **7.4 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.

### **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed Annually by the Family Services Manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. Educational setting status form**

During the Covid 19 pandemic the Educational Setting Status form will be completed every day and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by 2pm this is to allow the DfE to use the data on the same day.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	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
<b>-</b>	All should attend	Edited once mark has been recorded
<b>I</b>	Illness due to Covid 19	Confirmed case of Covid 19

<b>8</b>	Self-Isolating due to Covid 19	Advised by medical professional to self-isolate
<b>9</b>	Shielding due to Covid 19	Received a letter from medical professional advising the pupil to shield

Appendix A: Link to school guidance attendance in relation to Coronavirus Covid 19 during the 2021/2022 academic year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

