

Attendance Policy

Reviewed:	January 2026
Reviewed by (SLT Lead):	Deputy Headteacher - Behaviour, Attendance and Culture
Approved by:	Local Governing Body
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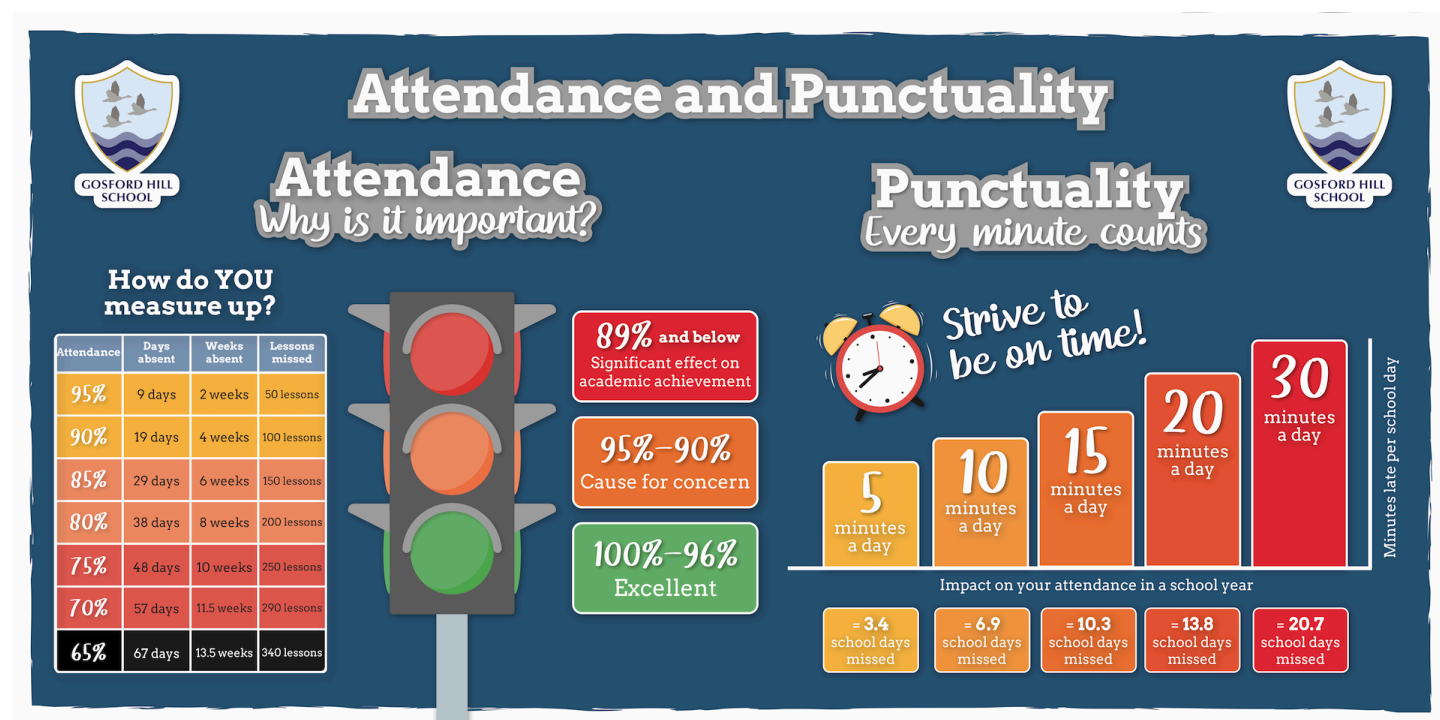
1. Aims

Gosford Hill School is committed to providing a full and ambitious education for our students to receive an excellent educational experience. Good attendance and punctuality to school is a fundamental feature of success for students.

This policy sets out our whole-school culture and ethos for attendance including how we:

- Define good attendance
- Promote good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school
- Promote and support punctuality to school and lessons

Gosford Hill School expects all students to have excellent punctuality and a minimum attendance of 96%.



2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance about [working together to improve school attendance](#) (from 19th August 2024) and statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility](#). These documents are drawn from legislation, setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- 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 \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a Student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [River Learning Trust Attendance Statement](#)
- [Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team](#) guidance referring to Penalty Notices and Attendance Contracts

3. Roles and responsibilities

Gosford Hill School and the DfE recognise that the potential barriers to good school attendance are wide, complex and specific to individual students and families. Achieving and securing good attendance for students is therefore a fundamental responsibility for all involved in Gosford Hill School.

This policy is approved by the Governing Board of Gosford Hill School. Beyond approval of this policy, the responsibilities of individuals and groups are outlined below:

Person or people	Roles and responsibilities
Governing Board	• Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos • Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties • Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data • Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school • Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
Headteacher	• Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos • Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents/carers through all available channels • Implementing this policy at the school • Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to governors • Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students • Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies • Where necessary, issuing fixed-penalty notices, and authorising the Deputy Headteacher to be able to do so • Where necessary, responding to requests for term-time absence, and authorising the Deputy Headteacher to be able to do so
Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour,	• Leading attendance across the school • Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

Attendance and Culture)	• Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes • Having an oversight of data analysis • Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data • Leadership, training, support and management of those responsible for: ◦ Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance ◦ Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families • Where necessary, issuing fixed-penalty notices (authorised by the Headteacher) • Where necessary, responding to requests for term-time absence • Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents/carers through all available channels
Attendance Officer	• Take calls and receive emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and the accurate recording of these on the school's management information system (Bromcom) • Transfer relevant messages from parents/carers to appropriate colleagues to provide them with detailed information to support student attendance • Monitoring and analysing attendance data • Benchmarking attendance data against data from the River Learning Trust, local and national datasets to identify areas of focus for improvement • Provide regular attendance reports to school staff • Report concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher • Working with education welfare officers and the local authority to tackle persistent absence, including writing and leading on attendance contracts • Advising the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher in regards to students meeting the national thresholds for fixed-penalty notices • In liaison with the Deputy Headteacher, coordinate the activities of those responsible for: ◦ Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance ◦ Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families ◦ Signing students in and out of school who arrive late or leave during the school day The Attendance Officer can be contacted via attendance@gosfordhillschool.org or by phoning our absence line, 01865 855378.
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)	• Working with the parents/carers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for these students, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students face in-school barriers • Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers that relate to the student's needs
Classroom teachers and form tutors	• Recording attendance to school and lessons, using the correct codes, within 10 minutes of the start of each session on Bromcom (or paper alternative as directed by the Attendance Officer if Bromcom is unavailable) • Reporting students who are missing from lessons, despite being marked present earlier in the day to duty@gosfordhillschool.org, within 10 minutes from the start of each session • Monitor punctuality and attendance to classes, reporting early concerns to the relevant Head of Phase and/or Attendance Officer • As a form tutor (supported by the relevant Head of Phase), build relationships with students and parents/carers to support good attendance by: ◦ Sharing attendance data with students during student development time ◦ Celebrating good attendance, or positive improvements for students ◦ Completing welfare calls or check-ins for students who have good

	attendance but a prolonged period of absence ○ Complete a 'strengths and difficulties questionnaire' with students whose attendance is an early cause for concern, to identify potential barriers to attendance ○ Set targets for students and monitor these using attendance or punctuality reports
Heads of Phase	● With the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer, coordinate and support the actions of the Assistant Head of Phase, Pastoral Assistants, Student Welfare Managers, and Form Tutors to: ○ Arrange calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance ○ Deliver targeted intervention and support to students and families ● Celebrate and promote good attendance through assemblies and Head of Phase communications ● Set targets for students and monitor these using attendance or punctuality reports ● Working with the Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher, education welfare officers and the local authority to tackle persistent absence, including writing and leading on attendance contracts
Parents/carers	● Make sure their child attends school on time ● Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on every day of absence, advising of the reason for absence and expected date of return ● Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child ● Ensure that, where possible, appointments (eg. medical or dental) for their child are made outside of the school day ● Where appointments must be within the school day, notify the school of these, and provide appropriate evidence (copy/screenshot of appointment letter/email/text) ● Seek, and engage in support to improve attendance where concerns exist
Students	● Attend school and every timetabled session, on time ● Engage in reports and support to improve attendance where concerns exist

4. Recording attendance

The DfE requires all schools to keep an electronic register of attendance. At Gosford Hill School, Bromcom is used for this purpose.

Attendance register

All Students are placed onto the attendance register on admission to the school.

The school's attendance register is completed twice a day; at the start of the morning and afternoon session. Using DfE attendance codes (see Appendix 1), the attendance register will mark whether a student is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will record the original and amended entry, the reason for amendment, the date the amendment was made and the person who is making the amendment.

The attendance register is retained on Bromcom for the life of the student's personal record as per our data protection policy.



The school day begins at 8:30am. This is the time that students must be present in their Student Development Time, so we recommend that students arrive at school no later than 8:25am. The first session or the attendance register closes at 9:00am.

Parents/carers wishing to access their child's attendance certificate can see this via their 'My Child At School' portal, or by contacting the Attendance Officer.

Lesson attendance

In addition to the statutory attendance register, Gosford Hill School uses Bromcom to record attendance at every lesson. Parents/carers can see this attendance record via their 'My Child At School' portal.

Lesson attendance is different to the statutory attendance register used for official statistical reporting to parents/carers, the local authority and the DfE. A student's school attendance figure is taken from the statutory attendance register and not lesson attendance. For example, a student may attend every lesson in a week, but arrive after 9:00am each day. Because they arrived after the morning register was closed, their attendance for that week would be recorded as 50% because they were not present during the morning registration session.

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of a student's unplanned absence by 8:30am (or as soon as practically possible) by calling or emailing the school's Attendance Officer. Parents/carers must continue to notify the school of continued absence on second or subsequent days until the child returns to school.

Absence due to illness will be marked as an authorised absence, 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 parent/carer to provide medical evidence. We will not ask for this evidence unnecessarily.

We encourage parents/carers to consider guidance from the NHS when deciding [whether their child is too unwell for school](#). Often some minor conditions can be managed without students being absent.

The school recognises that students can sometimes be nervous about attending school, due to worries about friendship, schoolwork or examinations. These are normal and usual for young people and the routine and social interaction that school provides will often help to ease these nerves. If a parent/carer thinks that their child requires support attending school and managing nerves or anxiety, they should contact the school as help can be provided through our pastoral and inclusion teams.

Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late to school, before the register has closed, will be marked as late (L). Students who arrive at school after the register has closed will be marked as absent for that session (U).

Students who are routinely late to school will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Parents/carers will be invited in for review meetings with form tutors, pastoral or senior leaders to identify barriers and plan interventions. Failure to improve punctuality following interventions may lead to formal action in conjunction with the local authority, including the use of attendance contracts and/or fixed-penalty notices.

Unexplained absences

Where a student does not attend, or stops attending school without communication or reason, the school will follow up robustly to ensure that all absence is explained. The school will:

- Contact the student's parents/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. This may include communication via email, phone call and/or text messaging.
- Attempts to contact the student's parents/carers will continue until the reason for absence can be ascertained, including the need for the absence to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

If the school cannot contact a parent/carer, we will make contact with all emergency contacts. If the school continues to be unable to communicate with a parent/carer, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Deputies will be informed and follow up action may include welfare visits to the student's house, liaison with the school's Education Welfare Officer, the Local Authority and/or the police as necessary.

5. Planned absences

As part of our whole-school culture and ethos for good attendance, Gosford Hill School discourages planned absence during term time.

Medical absence

Parents/carers are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where a medical or dental appointment has to happen during the school day, appointment times should be considered to ensure that students miss the fewest number of school hours possible. Absence of this nature will be authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school of the appointment in advance. This must be done by emailing attendance@gosfordhillschool.org.

Other types of absence

Parents/carers must apply for any other type of term-time absence from school as far in advance as possible. This must be done by filling in the leave of absence request form from the school's website.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time that the student is authorised to be absent for. Each application for term-time absence is considered individually, considering the facts, circumstances and relevant context for each request.

Requests for absence should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks in before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments that cannot be booked outside of the school day.
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will contact the relevant religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance.
- Traveller students travelling for occasional 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 student is attending educational provision.

Penalty notices

The school, Local Authority or police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Penalty notices may be issued when the national threshold for a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks) and support or other forms of intervention are not appropriate.

A term-time holiday is an example of an absence which may meet the threshold for a penalty notice and support or other forms of intervention are not appropriate.

Penalty notices can be issued to each person with parental responsibility who has allowed the absence. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority within 28 days. If a payment is not made after 28 days, the Local Authority reserves the right to escalate the penalty notice to prosecution.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent(s) must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 in 28 days.

Gosford Hill School will comply with guidance set out by Oxfordshire County Council who administer penalty notices as the school's Local Authority.

6. Promoting attendance

Promoting positive attendance to school is a key feature of the school's focus in order to ensure that students have the opportunities to achieve successful outcomes, academically and socially. Promoting positive attendance is a key part of our 'attendance by design' principle, considering aspects of school life that enable school life to be successful because of careful consideration for student experience.

Gosford Hill School recognises, and rewards students who maintain good attendance. This may include:

- Mentoring conversations with Form Tutor
- Regular praise messages for students with good attendance
- Issuing certificates or rewards through celebration assemblies for perfect, excellent or improved attendance
- Recognising attendance as part of our 'perfect week' and 100% attendance reward systems
- Event weeks and days where we recognise the importance of, and celebrate exceptionally positive attendance

7. Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data regularly throughout the year across the school and at an individual student or cohort level. This is done to identify whether there are any particular groups of students or individuals whose absences might be a cause for concern.

The school has granted the DfE access to the data held on Bromcom so that this can be securely and regularly accessed for national statistical reporting purposes. Data will also be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistical releases.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at a whole school, year group and cohort level against national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Governing Board.

Analysis of attendance and absence data compares historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence.

Attendance reports are provided to Form Tutors, pastoral and senior leaders in order to facilitate discussions with students and their families, monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions and modify them to inform future strategies.

The school is required to provide the Local Authority with the details of students who have been consistently absent for periods of ten school days and which has been classified as unauthorised. In addition, the school is required to provide the Local Authority with the details of students who are (or are likely to be) recorded as ill for 15 or more days.

Returning to school and reducing persistent and severe absence

The school recognises that some students, including those who have been medically or physically unwell, those who have SEND or those who have been absent for unavoidable periods of absence sometimes require support to successfully return to school. In addition, the school recognises that the barriers to attendance are complex and wide for some students.

Students are persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of school time (10 sessions in a rolling 10 week period or a minimum of 1 day a fortnight across a school year). This includes lateness to school after the morning register is closed. Students are persistently absent if they miss 50% or more of school time.

The Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer, will coordinate appropriate intervention strategies with appropriate colleagues who will lead on attendance improvement plans. In these circumstances the school will:

- Use attendance data to identify patterns or trends of absence
- Meet with the student and their parents/carers to understand the barriers to attendance or return to school
- Identify appropriate interventions to remove the barriers to attendance, or reduce their impact
- Where appropriate, the school will repeat this process regularly and routinely to reduce persistent or severe absence for students and engage with wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- In addition to engaging with wider support services, the school will liaise with the Local Authority, and/or Education Welfare Officers and may make use of:
 - Attendance contracts
 - Early help assessment processes
 - Legal sanctions including penalty notices, notice to improve or prosecution

The intention of the school will always be to successfully support students to return to school and reduce persistent or severe absence, successfully treating the root causes of absence. The school, and appropriate wider support partners will work together to:

- Expect: aspire to high standards of attendance.
- Monitor: rigorously use data to inform patterns before they become entrenched.
- Listen and understand: identify the barriers to attendance and agree how partners can work together.
- Facilitate support: remove barriers in school and help parents to remove barriers outside of school.
- Formalise support: explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place, including the use of attendance contracts or education supervision orders.
- Enforce: where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce through statutory intervention.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority and/or the DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour, Attendance and Culture). At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board.

9. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following [Gosford Hill School Policies](#):

- Behaviour policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Supporting students with medical conditions policy

10. Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every Student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session

Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective Student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays