



Attendance Policy

September 2020

Lead person: Mrs Shelley Desborough

Adopted by Governors: Autumn 2020

Date of revision: **Annually Autumn 2021**

Gamlingay Village Primary Absence and Attendance Policy (Autumn 2020)

INTRODUCTION

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring that all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated - **pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education**. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

The Government expects:

Schools and Local Authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;

and,

- Act early to address patterns of absences
 - Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
 - All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

DfE September 2013

AIMS

At Gamlingay Village Primary we believe that children should attend school every day of the academic year. We do all that we can to encourage children good attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is a positive ethos and culture that promotes a love of learning. In order to achieve this aim, we work hard to make our school a happy and rewarding environment for all. We also ensure that children who are unable to attend school, due to ill-health, are supported as appropriate.

ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

Under the Education Regulations 1995, the Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the school keeps accurate attendance registers. At Gamlingay Village Primary, attendance registers record the attendance of children who are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon session each day. They also record whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. These are kept on file for a minimum of three years.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

Children are expected to attend school for 190 days each year. One day counts as a morning and an afternoon session, a total of 380 sessions per year.

ATTENDANCE AND PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parent/ Carers are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December; if they turn five between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August.

PUNCTUALITY

It is important that children attend school on time each day; this is the parent/carer's responsibility. It is very disruptive for a class and the teacher, when a child is late after a lesson has started and it is equally distressing for a child to enter a lesson late.

Any child arriving after 8.55am must be signed in by a parent at the school office. There is a red folder called Signing in and out, in which to record time of arrival, reason for lateness and parents' signature. School cannot accept a reason for lateness from a child. If no satisfactory explanation is received from a parent, by the end of one week, the absence will remain as an unauthorised absence.

At GVP we expect children to be collected by a parent or a named adult, until Year 4. Class teachers should be informed of collection arrangements each morning, if they differ from the norm.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

The school doors open at 8.45am. Children enter through individual class doors and proceed quickly into their classrooms for a starter activity provided by their class teacher. During this time, attendance registers are taken by the class teacher.

Morning registration starts at 8.50am and closes at 8.55am. If a child arrives during registration he/she will be marked as late (L). After 8.55am this becomes an Unauthorised Absence (U) for that session and cannot be changed. The afternoon register is taken in the same way at 1pm.

Parents/Carers are required to provide a satisfactory explanation as to why their child is late before an attendance code may be changed. It is important to understand that not all explanations given by parents/ carers are considered to be authorised absence and care should be taken with any reason given. Explanations from children are not acceptable, which means that the unauthorised mark given originally, will remain on your child's attendance record for that academic year.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

If your child is ill, please notify school on **the first day of absence** and each morning during the illness. This is the parent's responsibility. The answer machine is checked daily. Leave a message stating; name of child; class; the reason for absence; name of the person leaving the message and the time. You may also e-mail the office with this information if you prefer – office@gamligayvp.org

No child should attend school until 48 hours after they have suffered sickness and/or diarrhoea.

If on the first day of absence a valid reason is not received a no reason mark will be coded against the child's name. If no valid reason is given within one week by a parent then that absence will remain as unauthorised absence and cannot be changed.

Every effort should be made to arrange dental/ medical appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, your child should be returned to school as soon as possible after the appointment. Parent/carers are required to sign their child(ren) in and out of school at the school office in the red signing in and out folder.

If your child becomes unwell during the school day, we will make every effort to contact you, so it is important that we have up to date contact numbers. Should your contact details change, please inform the school office as soon as possible.

ABSENCE

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The school office may contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence, if no reason for absence has been received.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will inform the school office. The school will then contact the parent/carer immediately in order to check on the safety of the child.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME ARE NOT AUTHORISED and may incur a penalty fine

In exceptional circumstances, parent/carers may seek authorisation from the Headteacher.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE and PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The national expectation for attendance is 96% or more.

All attendance and absence is monitored closely by the school; figures for whole school attendance are published by Ofsted and the DfE. Records of your child's attendance are kept year on year for comparison.

Should your child's attendance fall below 90% in a six week period then this is classed as persistent absence. All absence is followed up by the school initially. Sometimes, absence may involve the support and intervention of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

We use the Cambridgeshire 'three letter' system to alert parents to the fact that there may be a problem with attendance. If a pattern of absence or regular absences emerge, during monitoring, you will receive a letter from the Headteacher (attendance falling below 95%) outlining the concerns. You will be invited in to school to discuss this child's file with the Headteacher and to agree targets. A record of this meeting will be kept on your file. Should there be no improvement in attendance the EWO will become involved and this may incur a fixed penalty; it may even incur a custodial sentence.

THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO), based with locality team (01954 284680) is able to support and advise parent/carers on many issues including frequent lateness or regular absence from school. The EWO visits regularly to monitor whole school and individual attendance. Any persistent lateness or absence may be followed up, by letter, home visits and even fixed penalties or more lengthy and costly penalties or prosecution in a magistrate's court.

DEFINITIONS OF ABSENCE

Authorised absence – an absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received a reason from a parent/carer as required, an example of this could be when a child has been ill.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences and supported absences by parents will be classed as authorised. For example if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or if a parent keeps a child at home because the parent or relative is ill, this is not an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence – an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Exceptional Circumstances – some absences may be authorised due to exceptional circumstances. This could be:

- A short absence to attend a special religious/cultural festival, may constitute an exceptional circumstance
- Bereavement in the immediate family

Requests for holidays during school time, because the cost is cheaper, or parents have not been able to take the time during school holidays, **does not** constitute exceptional circumstances

LONG TERM ABSENCE

Occasionally, a child is absent from school due to illness or a medical reason, sometimes this might be long and protracted. In this instance the school will work with the family and outside support services to provide the best possible solution, which may include arrangements for tutoring out of school.

REWARDS

Headteacher awards are part of our culture of celebration. From time to time children will be rewarded for excellent attendance (100%) e.g. a whole year. This may involve receipt of a special attendance certificate or a negotiated reward for the group/class/ individual with the best attendance record.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board of Gamlingay Village Primary to monitor overall attendance. Regular attendance and absence figures are discussed by the Governing Board. The Governors work closely with the school to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as possible.

The school keeps accurate attendance records on file. Parents receive a copy of their child's annual attendance alongside the written annual report in July. Attendance records are kept on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they are aware of any unexpected absence during the school day, they will alert the school office and/or Headteacher as soon as possible.

POLICY AGREEMENT AND REVIEW

This policy was agreed by staff in Autumn 2020 and takes account of the changes to attendance and absence issued by the DfE in 2013.

The policy was agreed by the Governing Body in Autumn 2020

Implementation of the policy was in the Autumn term 2020.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner, should there be changes to the DfE legislation and guidance.

Addendum: COVID-19 School Attendance Policy September 2020

Link to updates

[Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/addendum-to-school-attendance-policy-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year)

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID19). To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – '**not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID19)**'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (**set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance**), in addition to the new category of '**not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code **X**
- schools should continue to use code **X** for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code **I** – illness, as would usually be the case. Code **X** should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code **X** should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code **I** (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil’s household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code **X** should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code **X** should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

View stay at home guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

and NHS test and trace guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus>

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code **X** should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

View guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): how to self-isolate when you travel to England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-england)

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine⁵. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code **X** should be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only View guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code **X**.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code **X** should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code **X** - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.

1. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
2. **And their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there.**
3. **Code X is not counted as an absence in the school census.**
4. [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) Regulations 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

From September 2020 attendance figures will be reported (for whole week by 4pm on Friday) to the trust officer responsible for primary and secondary school