

**Attendance Policy**

**Durham Gilesgate Primary School**

**Academic Year**

**2022/23**

**Attendance Policy**

**2022 - 2023**

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<b>Author of document:</b>	Mark Turner	<b>Job role:</b>	Headteacher
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## Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Mark Turner	Head Teacher	m.turner100@gilesgatepri.org.uk
Lisa Blondrage	School Office Administrator for attendance	gilesgateprimary@durhamlearning.net
Sarah Tallentire	Special Interest Governor for attendance	s.tallentire500@gilesgatepri.org.uk

### Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Class Teachers	Class Teachers	0191 3847284
Lily Morris	Positive Futures Advisor	l.morris102@gilesgatepri.org.uk
Mark Turner	Head Teacher	m.turner100@gilesgatepri.org.uk
Kim Peacock	Attendance Improvement Officer	kim.peacock@durham.gov.uk

On a day to day basis parents are able to discuss attendance issues with their class teacher or with staff in the school office. Depending on the nature of your enquiry you may be passed onto Lily Morris or Mark Turner for advice and support. If required they can also help you access support from Kim Peacock who is our named attendance improvement officer in the Local Authority.

### Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Durham Gilesgate Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

### Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance

throughout their time in both primary and secondary school, gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

### **Here's what the data shows:**

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

### **In Our School**

Attending regularly and being on time, allows children to make a good start to each school day and it helps them feel part of their class and the whole school.

Arriving at school late can be embarrassing for some children and they have to work hard to catch up the teaching they may have missed.

### **This policy is supported by our policies on:**

Safeguarding

Behaviour

The school and all partners will work together to:

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **1. Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## **2. Attendance data**

We record attendance at the start of each morning and afternoon, the attendance marks are held within a data base which can be produce reports for monitoring purposes.

Each week a 100% report is used so that children who have attended every day in that week can be rewarded with a 100% sticker.

Each week a group attendance report is used to tell us which class has the highest rate of attendance for that week and they are presented with the attendance trophy in assembly.

Attendance data is also used to inform discussions that we want to have with parents. For example, tracking of attendance data might show that a child has a pattern of absences on a particular day, or there are frequent illness absences with the same reason provided each time.

## **3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

If attendance, including punctuality, is becoming a concern we will contact you.

In the first instance discussions may take place over the phone but if attendance is approaching 90% or lower we will invite parents to attend a face to face Attendance Planning Meeting (APM). These discussions and meetings will be supportive, we will explore the reasons behind any absences and plan for ways to improve attendance together.

## **4. Facilitate support**

Support can take a variety of forms. Sometimes parents tell us that they have been "too soft" and have allowed their child to have a day off school with a minor illness such as a sore throat or mild cough. In these cases the discussion with school staff helps the parent to focus on what is important about attendance.

Sometimes the parent may tell us that their child is "acting up" at home. Those parents take further advice and support, by working with Lily Morris, our Positive Futures Advisor. They can get advice on reward systems for home and how to implement these in a consistent and positive way to help improve attendance.

Sometimes there may be complex factors that affect attendance and in these cases we would want parents to voluntarily access external advice and support though Early Help. The Early Help practitioners can work with families in more depth and help gain positive outcomes.

## 5. Formalise support

If absence persists and is 90% or lower this is classed as **persistent absenteeism**. In these cases we would always want families to engage with school and improve attendance.

Where parents are reluctant to do so more formal processes will start; depending on the circumstances we may formalise support through a parenting contract or an education supervision order.

## 6. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. This will mean that you can receive a formal warning at first and if absence does not improve after this warning then a 'caution' will be issued. The 'caution' is a final warning before legal action is started.

We always wish to avoid legal action against families so it is essential that you work with us in the informal stages at first.

### **General / frequently asked questions**

#### **When can children be absent from school?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

#### **What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact the school office as early as possible to explain why. If not, we will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Turner has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

His decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

## **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leave of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your Mr. Turner will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

## **Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes**

### **Attendance and absence management**

#### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will give out a weekly trophy for the class with the best attendance. Each week children with 100% attendance will receive a golden 100% attendance sticker. Attendance percentages for each class will be displayed in the school hall. Children who have good attendance or who have attendance that has improved will receive a letter from the Headteacher praising their attendance.

#### **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

#### **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

### **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will contact parents and failing that, extended family contacts provided by you, to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

### **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

### **Punctuality:**

The school doors open at 8:50, giving children time to enter school, hang coats up and enter their classroom. Registration time is at **9.00am** and **1.00pm** for children in Reception and through to Key Stage 2, it is **8:55am** for children in nursery and the 2 year old room.

At 9:00 am the pupil entry gates to the yard will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class.

The beginning of the day is often when children take part in some intervention work such as gross or fine motor skills, practising handwriting or responding to marking and making corrections to previous work. Missing out on any of this work impacts negatively on the attainment of children. Pupils that are late beyond 9:05 often miss out on the start of the lesson and find it hard to catch up and know what to do when they enter their class.

If a child arrives in school 15 minutes after 8:50 then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed in the classroom at this point (9:05). A further 10 minutes will be given for late arrival and any children arriving beyond 9:15 late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

### **In summary**

In the morning, arrival up to 9:05 will be marked as present (/), arrival from 9:05 to 9:15 will be marked as late (L) and arrival after 9:15 will be marked as unauthorised late (U)

### **If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

### **If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

If punctuality becomes an issue we will contact you and arrange a meeting so that we can find out why. At first this will be informal and we may be able to support you, or signpost you to services that can help.

**If lateness becomes persistent** with no identifiable reason

If punctuality is persistent with identifiable reasons given we will invite you to an Attendance Planning Meeting (APM), where we can discuss the issue and set targets for improvement.

**If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

If the targets set in the APM are not met and punctuality remains an problem more formal intervention will be taken as necessary, through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

### **Help & Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

### **Pupils with specific needs**

This attendance policy takes into account the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those with medical conditions.

In these cases the consideration of attendance will always take into account the reasons for absence in light of each child's individual needs. We will always consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For example; some of our children may have cochlear implants fitted whilst they are attending school and these require regular appointments, often in school time, to tune the implants.

### **Children Missing from Education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.

#### **Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the Pupil Welfare Committee take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

#### **School Leadership Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job.
- Report to Full Governing Body and / or Pupil Welfare Committee meeting each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

#### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.

- Ensure the senior manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each session.

**Parents / Carers:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary or avoidable school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.