

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL CHILDREN AT THE SCHOOL INCLUDING THOSE IN THE EYFS

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

ATTENDANCE POLICY.....	2
1. Aims.....	3
2. This is the attendance policy of Gayhurst School (the School).....	3
3. Scope and application.....	3
4. Regulatory framework.....	3
5. Definitions and interpretation .....	4
6. The importance of good attendance .....	5
7. School responsibilities.....	5
8. Staff responsibilities.....	6
Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance: .....	6
All staff.....	6
School arrangements .....	6
9. Monitoring attendance .....	7
10. Additional needs.....	7
11. Parent / carer responsibilities.....	8
12. Information sharing .....	8
13. Record keeping and confidentiality.....	9
14. Appendix.....	10
Appendix 1 - School arrangements .....	10
Appendix 2 - EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) Checklist.....	13
Appendix 3 - National attendance and absence codes .....	15

### Key School contacts

<b>Senior Attendance Champion (SAC)</b>  <b>Melisa Legg (including EYFS provision)</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:mlegg@gayhurstschool.co.uk">mlegg@gayhurstschool.co.uk</a>  Telephone number: 01753882690
<b>Designated Safeguarding Team</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:safeguarding@gayhurstschool.co.uk">safeguarding@gayhurstschool.co.uk</a>  Telephone: 01753882690

## 1. Aims

**This is the attendance policy of Gayhurst School (the School).**

- a. The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.
- b. The aims of this policy are as follows:
  - a. to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
  - b. to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
  - c. to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, to reduce absence in order to prevent children becoming children missing education (CME), and set out the School's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
  - d. to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
  - e. to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

## 2. Scope and application

- a. This policy applies to the whole School [including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)]
- b. This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

## 3. Regulatory framework

- a. This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:
  - a. Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
  - b. EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025);
  - c. Education and Skills Act 2008;
  - d. Children Act 1989;
  - e. Childcare Act 2006;
  - f. Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, May 2025);
  - g. The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
  - h. Equality Act 2010; and
  - i. Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- b. This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice: [*Please check the links below to ensure the guidance is up to date*]
  - a. [Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance](#) (DfE, August 2024);
  - b. [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, August 2024);

- c. Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance (DfE, August 2024);
  - d. Guidance for Parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);
  - e. "Is my child too ill for school?" guidance (NHS, April 2024);
  - f. Keeping children safe in education (DfE, September 2025);<sup>[5]</sup>
  - g. Children missing education (DfE, September 2025);
  - h. Summary table of responsibilities for children missing education (DfE, September 2025);
  - i. Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school (DfE, August 2017);
  - j. Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, February 2024);
  - k. Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, November 2018);
  - l. Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);
  - m. Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);
  - n. Providing remote education: guidance for schools (DfE, updated August 2024); and
  - o. [SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)].
- c. The following School policies, procedures and resource materials are relevant to this policy:
- a. Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures;
  - b. Risk assessment policy for pupil welfare;
  - c. Missing child policy and procedures
  - d. Policy on special educational needs;
  - e. Behaviour policy;
  - f. Parent Contract;

## 4. Definitions and interpretation

- 1.2 Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:
- a. references to **attendance** include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day.
  - b. references to the **Proprietor** are references to the board of Governors.
  - c. references to a **Parent** means:
    - i. all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
    - ii. any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
    - iii. any person who has day to day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).
  - d. References to a **pupil** includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school except a person who is 19 or over for whom further education is being provided, or a person for whom part-time education suitable for people over compulsory school age is being provided.<sup>[8]</sup>

- e. References to **children missing education (CME)** mean children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a School and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at School.<sup>[9]</sup>
- f. **SAC** means the School's attendance champion

## 5. The importance of good attendance

- a. The School recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the School's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:
  - a. the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
  - b. the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
  - c. the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and Parents;
  - d. that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
  - e. children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

## 6. School responsibilities

- a. The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the School community.
- b. The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and Parents.
- c. Where there are challenges to attendance, the School will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- d. The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- e. The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance, those at risk of becoming CME, and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

## 7. Staff responsibilities

### The SAC

- a. The school has appointed a senior member of staff of the School's leadership team as SAC to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Details of the individual appointed are at the front of this policy.
  - a. The SAC's responsibilities are:
    - i. to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
    - ii. to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
    - iii. to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
    - iv. to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
    - v. to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and Parents.

### Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance:

- a. Form Teachers have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. They should:
  - a. have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
  - b. record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;
  - c. seek explanations of absences required from pupils on their return to School;
  - d. make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School;
  - e. look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns;
  - f. deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly;
  - g. consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies; and
  - h. discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and Parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

### All staff

- a. The School ensures that all staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and Parents about it.
- b. The School provides appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities.

### School arrangements

- a. The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers are kept electronically.

## 8. Monitoring attendance

- a. The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:
  - a. monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
  - b. using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
  - c. undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;
  - d. conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
  - e. benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
  - f. devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
  - g. monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and

## 9. Additional needs

- a. The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend School, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.
- b. The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.
- c. It will also work with Parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.
- d. Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- e. Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.
- f. Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with Parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.
- g. The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the

pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

## 10. Parent / carer responsibilities

- a. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education.
- b. This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.
- c. The School will help Parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- d. Expectations the School places on Parents can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy
- e. Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.

## 11. Information sharing

- a. Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.
- b. The School, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).
- c. Where enquiries following the absence of a pupil lead the School to reasonably believe that the child will not return, and no alternative provision has been confirmed by the parent, the School will make a referral to the child's home local authority CME team without delay.
- d. Where appropriate the School will attend regular targeting support meetings.
- e. The School is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:
  - a. New pupil and deletion returns;
  - b. Attendance returns;
  - c. Sickness returns.
- f. The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the School's registers.
- g. The School must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State.

- h. Where appropriate, the School is expected to inform a pupil's social worker and / or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences.

## **12. Record keeping and confidentiality**

- 1.2 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 2.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

## 13. Appendix

### Appendix 1 - School arrangements

#### Managing attendance

1.5 The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils, promote attendance and prevent children becoming CME. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the School for the relevant time period as stated by law.

2.5 The School expects all pupils to be present at School for the whole of the School day, usually from registration at 8.45am.

#### The role of Parents / carers

- a. The School expects all Parents to:
  - a. make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity via My School Portal (MSP);
  - b. notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this on MSP;
  - c. notify the School in writing if their child will no longer attend the School after a certain day and supply information to the School about how their child will be continuing to receive suitable education; and
  - d. cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

#### Registration and attendance checks

- a. Morning registration is at 8.45am.
- b. Afternoon registration will be at 1.45pm.
- c. Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom or in an alternative lesson.
- d. If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).
- e. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given / not given will be recorded.
- f. The School uses ISAMS to register pupils

#### Reporting absence

- a. If a pupil is to be absent from School for any reason, the parent / carer should report this on MSP on first and every subsequent morning of absence;
- b. Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

### Authorised absences

- a. Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.
- b. The school may 'approve' an absence via the system on MSP, this does not mean it is an authorised absence.

### Applications for an authorised leave of absence

- a. Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the School day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing via MSP.
- b. The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.
- c. Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission from the Head.
- d. Dental or medical appointments should be made during School holidays or after the school day except in cases of emergency.
- e. A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parents belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

### Reporting duties

- a. The School is legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:
  - a. **New Pupil and Deletion returns:** notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
  - b. **Attendance returns:** providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and / or U).
  - c. **Sickness returns:** providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year.

- b. Each time the School's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.
- c. Action will also be taken in accordance with the Missing child policy and safeguarding and child protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare. This includes referring any concerns about a pupil to local children's social care services and instigating a police welfare check where necessary.

## Appendix 2 - EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) Checklist

This checklist is designed for staff to record actions taken when supporting a pupil with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). It provides an evidence trail in line with Buckinghamshire Council's attendance and safeguarding guidance.

Stage	Actions	Tick & Date
1. Identification	<input type="checkbox"/> Absence pattern identified (persistent absence/lateness). <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer contacted on Day 1 of absence. <input type="checkbox"/> Concern logged on attendance system.	
2. Initial Response (Days 1-5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily contact maintained with parent/carer. <input type="checkbox"/> Home visit considered if concerns escalate. <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding concerns assessed and referred if necessary.	
3. Exploring Barriers	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer meeting held. <input type="checkbox"/> Child's voice gathered (conversation, survey, drawing, trusted adult). <input type="checkbox"/> Triggers explored: Anxiety / Bullying / SEN or learning / Medical / Family context. <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance support plan drafted.	
4. In-School Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable adjustments (phased return, reduced timetable, quiet start, safe space, buddy system). <input type="checkbox"/> Key adult allocated. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular check-ins scheduled. <input type="checkbox"/> Progress reviewed fortnightly. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies and outcomes recorded.	
5. Referral / Multi-Agency Support (~10 days)	<input type="checkbox"/> EWS consulted/involved. <input type="checkbox"/> Early Help Assessment	

	<p>considered/completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to SEND support services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to GP/CAMHS if mental health concerns.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social care referral if safeguarding issues.</li> </ul>	
6. Review & Escalation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance plan reviewed with parents/carers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adjustments updated.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> EWS warning/parenting contract considered.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Penalty notice/legal action only after support steps evidenced.</li> </ul>	
7. Ongoing Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance tracked weekly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SLT/governors informed.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff training needs identified.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family engagement maintained.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 3 - National attendance and absence codes

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder).

### Attending the school

#### Code Definition

/ \	Present at the school / = morning session / afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity

### Absent - leave of absence

#### Code Definition

C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

### Absent - other authorised reasons

#### Code Definition

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
---	---

- R Religious observance
- I Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- E Suspended or permanently excluded

#### Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

##### Code Definition

- Q Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- Y1 Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed (e.g. due to adverse weather)
- Y5 Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause<sup>42</sup>

#### Absent - unauthorised absence

##### Code Definition

- G Holiday not granted by the school
- N Reason for absence not yet established<sup>43</sup>
- O Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- U Arrived in school after registration closed

#### Administrative codes

##### Code Definition

- Z Prospective pupil not on admission register
- # Planned whole school closure