

# Deerhurst and Apperley C of E Primary School



## Attendance

Reviewed September 2024

Next review Sept 2026

*Deerhurst and Apperley School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share the same commitment. All staff and volunteers are subject to an enhanced DBS check. Please refer to the school's Safeguarding Children Policy for more information. All recruitment is inline with KCSIE 2024*

*"If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996."*

At Deerhurst and Apperley C of E Primary School we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

## Legislation and guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced new statutory guidance from August 2024, called ['Working Together to Improve School Attendance'](#), aimed at reducing term-time holidays and unauthorised absences, and supporting families whose children are struggling to attend.

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

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Roles and responsibilities

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before (*insert time your register closes*) on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

**The governing body** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- **Mrs Kathryn Witney** is our Safeguarding governor and as such is the governor responsible for monitoring attendance.

**The headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The designated senior leader (*Mrs Jayne Neveu*)** is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer (*Mrs Susan Mottram*)** is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with school staff eg pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

## School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - The original entry
  - The amended entry
  - The reason for the amendment
  - The date on which the amendment was made
  - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by *8.40am* on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at *8.45* and will be kept open until *08.55* but no longer than *20 minutes* The register for the afternoon session will be taken at *1.30pm*.

## Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

Mrs Mottram will contact parents by phone if no message has been received from them at the start of the day or by 10am at the latest.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

### **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

*Parents must notify the school by written communication where possible or by phone if it is an unplanned appointment obtained as an emergency.*

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil 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 the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances will be defined by using reference to the DFE guidance but will be at the discretion of the headteacher.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least *two weeks* before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible on the school website or from the front office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Guidance from the MOD for Service families

## Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may *contact emergency services*
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will *contact the LA or MASH team if necessary*.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

*Induction days are used to promote attendance at Deerhurst and Apperley*

## Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels *through reports but also letters if intervention is needed*
- Monitor attendance and absence data *daily* across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to *governors (FGB) and class teachers*, and other school leaders (*SENCo*), to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- *Use the graduated pathway to identify targets and support, send attendance letters and remind parents via emails and leaflets*

- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

## Legal sanctions

### Support first

The new 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' Guidance emphasises a 'Support First' ethos, encouraging the school, parents and other agencies to work together to understand why a child is not attending school and put in place effective solutions to address them.

As such, if you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact Mrs Neveu as soon as possible so that we can better understand the issues, and ensure appropriate support is put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

### Formalising and intensifying the support

Where voluntary 'support first' has not been effective, or it has not been engaged with, we will work with partners, including Gloucestershire County Council, to formalise and intensify the support, this could include one of the following measures:

- **Notice to Improve**

If a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within 10 school weeks, you may receive a '*Notice to Improve*' notification, sent via email on behalf of the school and issued by Gloucestershire County Council. Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon). Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence, where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place;
- arriving late after the register has closed; or
- a combination of these, with holidays taken during term time.

These 10 weeks can span different terms, academic years, and even different educational settings, such as transitions to secondary school or in-year school changes.

*Example: if your child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in July (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, you may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.*

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences'. Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a Penalty Notice may then be requested and issued by the school and County Council to each parent/carer responsible for the child.

### Penalty Notice

As stated above penalty notices will usually be issued when a notice to improve has not been effective, however, they may also be issued directly for any holiday-related absence that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

Schools are *not* permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and must consider each application for a leave of absence individually, before making a decision.

From September 2024, the penalty fine is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a three-year, continuous period, the fine is £160 and there would be no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including, for example, step-parents with day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be issued with a Penalty Notice and fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.

*Example: If two adults take two children out of school the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).*

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, Gloucestershire County Council may proceed the case to Court.

If you would also like more information, please visit Gloucestershire County Council's public attendance pages: [Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

The primary goal of these measures is to ensure that children do not miss out on their education. Every lesson is a crucial part of your child's learning journey, and frequent absences can significantly hinder their progress.

## Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

*Child Protection, Wellbeing and Safeguarding/Behaviour*

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum *by the headteacher yearly when it is by the full governing body.*



Signed:

Head teacher Jayne Neveu

Date October 8<sup>th</sup> 2024

Signed: Andrew Matthews October 8<sup>th</sup> 2024  
Governors

Chair of

Date:



