



The Active Learning Trust

Attendance Policy	
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INTRODUCTION

Here at Gusford Primary School, we are committed to providing high quality education for ALL our children and believe that each child can only achieve their full potential by being at school every day – Attendance and Punctuality has a direct impact on attainment.

The whole school community has a responsibility to ensure good attendance, this includes Teaching and Support staff, School Governors, Parents and Carers, and children themselves. Below we will clarify the roles and expectations we have for all involved.

SCHOOL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ALL staff at Gusford Primary School have a responsibility to ensure good attendance is promoted and encouraged throughout school at all times. It is the role of the school and school staff to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children feel valued and are eager to learn to their best ability. Staff are also responsible for setting good examples with their own punctuality and attendance.

REGISTRATION/PUNCTUALITY

Schools are legally required to complete the attendance register twice daily – Morning session/Afternoon session.

A child will be considered late for school if they arrive at school after 8.50am and will be marked as 'L' (late) on the register. If a child arrives after the register closes at 9.05am in the morning and after lunch (KS1 1.15pm and KS2 1.30pm) they will be marked as 'U' on the register. This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session which will affect their

attendance and could lead to a Penalty Notice Fine being issued or a referral to Suffolk County Council's Education Welfare Service.

The registers will close at 09.05 and 13.15 for KS1 and 1.30pm KS2.

ABSENCE

There are two types of Absence and both will impact on a child's learning opportunities

AUTHORISED – Approved by school

UNAUTHORISED – Not Approved by school (This includes a late mark after the registration has closed)

Absence/leave will **only** be authorized in the following circumstances

- Where leave has been granted by the Head Teacher (or Head of School in her absence)
- Where the school is satisfied the child is too ill to attend
- Where the child has a medical appointment, which was unable to be made out of school hours (We encourage you to attempt to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible)
- Religious observance
- Other exceptional circumstances at the Head Teacher's discretion or Deputies in his absence (i.e. bereavement)

PLEASE NOTE – Holidays will not be authorised during term time and if taken, will result in a Penalty Notice Fine being issued after the 4 day. We understand that family time is extremely valuable and that term time holidays are often chosen due to financial constraints. However, due to the impact any absence can have on a child's learning, Gusford does not authorise term time holidays.

Notes

1. If the only time leave of absence can be taken is in term time, and there are **exceptional** circumstances, families need to make a request on the school's absence request form **4 weeks in advance** to the Headteacher. Any absence requested at less than 4 weeks' notice, will automatically be unauthorised. The school office will process the request and the Headteacher/attendance officer may contact the family to discuss the request. Once a decision has been made, you will receive an acknowledgement letter, advising whether or not the leave is authorised.
2. Pupils should always be encouraged to come to school; minor sniffles and tummy aches are often soon forgotten about once they start having fun with their learning.

If a child has recurrent medical appointments or should need to be absent from school for a prolonged period. We would require supporting documentation regarding this which can be photocopied at the office (i.e. GP/Dentist appointment card, Hospital letter, prescription packaging)

If a child's attendance drops below **98%** the school will discuss with parents their concerns. If a child's attendance drops below **96%**, no absences will be authorised without the above-mentioned supporting documents. Should a pupil's attendance become a cause for concern Gusford may refer the pupil's case to Suffolk County Council's Education Welfare Service who will write to you to arrange a meeting regarding the attendance of your child.

Please advise us at your earliest convenience of any instances where a child needs to be collected early from school or by someone who is not on the list for collection.

DATA COLLECTION

We will collect attendance data from our systems which is monitored by the Head of School and our Attendance Officer and shared with our Governors to help improve attendance and procedures within the school. This data is also shared with DfE and Suffolk County Council within specified timeframes.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

FIRST DAY CALLING/DAILY CONTACT – When a child is absent from school, if we have not heard from a parent/carer at the beginning of each day of absence (unless previously arranged) The child will be marked as absent and the parents/carers will receive either a telephone call, text or both asking for contact regarding the absence. Until this is received the absence will remain unauthorised. If no contact is made or prolonged absence occurs, our Parent Liaison Officer may visit your home unannounced in line with our safeguarding procedures.

- **At 96%** - Communication which will include Stage 1 letters to remind of attendance impact and to say that their attendance is being monitored. There will also be a meeting with the class teacher or Year Leader to discuss attendance.
- **Between 96% -95%**- Additional letters and at least one formal meeting to outline the minimum expectation, steps of intervention, agree required support, sanctions and first meetings to set targets and intervene with a senior member of the school.
- All letters and meetings will be logged for school records.
- **Below 90%** - Pupils and families need to have intensive work including any schemes of Fast Track or EWO intervention. Including regular face to face meetings to track progress towards agreed targets.
- Fixed penalties will be applied for Persistent Absence and holidays.

MEETINGS WITH PARENTS

Where there is an emerging pattern of absence *with or without* explanation, or if attendance is below 95%, the attendance leads will advise the Headteacher. Where there are concerns about attendance, both authorised and unauthorised, a letter will be sent home advising parent/carers of any concerns and a meeting will be arranged to discuss any barriers affecting the child attending school and what support we can offer around this. Initial telephone calls may also be made to discuss this.

PROMOTION OF GOOD ATTENDANCE IN SCHOOL

We will endeavour to have up to date displays around the school and run mini initiatives between classes to encourage the children to want to be in school and help them realise that great attendance is rewarding.

We work on a Red, Amber, Green attendance progress system where termly, we inform parents/carers where their child/children are sitting. The following colours/figures are how this is recorded:

- RED – Below 0-90%
- AMBER – 91% - 95.99%
- GREEN – 96% - 100%

Parents will also be advised of their child's attendance annually with their child's report

Our Parent Liaison Officer may work with children either individually or as part of a group to help improve attendance. During these sessions, potential barriers, ways to improve and responsibilities will be discussed. There may also be an attendance agreement signed by the pupil and the team. This includes mini targets being set with a visual reward chart.

PARENTS' AND CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children who are of school age are in full time education (Education Act 1996).

Parents and Carers are expected by Gusford Primary School to do the following

- Ensure their child/children attend school every day on time
- Support their child's/children's attendance by keeping absences to a minimum and only when completely necessary.
- Notify School each morning a child is absent from school due to illness, unless it is a pre-arranged absence. You can leave a message on the answering machine at any time using the school number
- Engage with any support offered by school which we believe will help the child/children improve their attendance

GOVERNORS RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors will assess data and information provided by the school to ensure procedures are in place and effective and that the welfare and safeguarding of the children are being promoted at all times. Attendance is a key part of this

CONCLUSION

Great attendance and punctuality is a key factor not only in increasing a child's learning opportunities but also other areas of life, such as social development, interaction with peers and adults. It also imbeds the understanding that hard work is rewarded and how to be accountable for themselves and their actions.

At Gusford Primary School, we take attendance seriously not only because of the direct impact it has on learning but because we care.

Seeing a child attend every day and their confidence grow is just as rewarding for staff here at Gusford as it is seeing our own children flourish so we ask for your support in helping us to raise the attendance of each and every child to give them the chances and opportunities they deserve during their time with us and for their future as they move on up through their education journey and beyond.