



Attendance Policy Reviewed November 2016

All policies at GSSC are written to reflect Statutory Requirements or National Guidance and updated in accordance with this. There are times when the Government or Local Authority provide updates to policies that are outside of the policy review schedules. In such instances, an appendix will be added to policies to reflect these updates until the Governing Board can ratify these amended policies. These appendices will supersede previously issued Statutory Requirements or National Guidance.



Policy Written by/date:	Signed/Date: Chair or Vice Chair	Policy due for review:
Tracy Phillips Feb 2016 updated	Jane Brand March 16	Feb 17 or sooner if required
Mike Tebbutt Dec 2016 updated	Jane Brand Dec 16	Feb 18 or sooner if required

This Policy is linked to the following School Policies and/or Procedures

Curriculum Policies	School Policies	School Business/Finance Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • SEN • English (incl Library) • Art • DT • Forest Schools • Humanities • Maths • P.E • PSHE • ICT/Computing • R.E • Collective Worship • Science • Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) • Careers • Post 16 (inc Consortium) • Communication • ASD • Music • School Council • Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural including promoting fundamental British Values • Teaching and Learning • Conductive Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection and Safeguarding • Inclusion Policy and SEN Info • SEN Report • Positive Intervention • Prospectus • Pupil Attendance • Anti—Bullying • Designated Teacher (LAC) • Exclusions Policy • Volunteers • Animal Visits • Educational Visits • Exams/Accreditation • Staff Dress Code • First Aid Health and Medications • Intimate Care • Manual Handling/Mobility • Initial Teacher Training • Planning, Preparation and Assessment • Continuing Professional Development • Teaching Assistants • Well-Being of Staff and Student • SEF • SDP • Bereavement • Use of Photography and Video • Acceptable Use • E-Safety • Non-Smoking/Electronic Cigarettes Policy • Complaints • Assessment, Recording and Reporting • Parental Involvement • Student Participation • Home School Agreement • Healthy Eating • Transition • Pupil Premium • Supporting pupils in school with medical conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection • Confidentiality • Pay Policy • Register of Business interests of HT and Governors • Accessibility Plan • Charging • Freedom of Information • Publication Scheme • Staff Grievance • School Companies • School Income • Lettings • Code of Conduct for all Staff • Governor Allowances • Allegations of abuse against staff • Health and Safety • Retention of data • Recruitment and Selection Policy (Safer Recruitment) • Governing Board Succession Planning • Whistleblowers • Instrument of Government • Staff Discipline, Conduct and Grievance procedures • Equal Opportunity Policy • Equality Duty • Staffing Structure • Staff Attendance Planned • Staff Attendance Unplanned • Anti-Harassment • School Emergency Plan • Critical Incidents • Transport • Pool Safety and Procedures • Lone working • Capability Policy • Visiting speakers policy • Appraisal

GSSC

Attendance Policy

At GSSC we strive to encourage parents/carers to achieve as close to 100% attendance for their children as possible, as we believe consistency and continuity of attendance to be fundamental elements in helping children to build the foundations for independent learning and behaviour management.

At GSSC we make every endeavour to encourage parents / carers to work with us to minimise unauthorised absences. We will strive to reduce our unauthorised absences through close home / school liaison, incorporating the work of the Extended Team and our Attendance Officer.

Parents/carers responsibilities:

- Parents/carers must ensure that their child attends regularly
- To notify the school office and SEN transport if applicable in advance if any absence is planned / known e.g. illness, medical appointment etc, though we expect these to be made outside school hours wherever possible.
- To notify SEN transport and school of any altered arrangements e.g. child staying at grandparents etc.
- We do however ask parents / carers to keep pupils at home if they are really ill and to inform us on the first day of absence.
- For pupils who do not travel on transport, parents / carers are expected to bring their child to school and collect them at home time although some older children walk home / part way home.

Department for Education - School Attendance *(taken from School Attendance – November 2016):*

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring 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 school.

The government expects Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence.
- 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.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.

The school must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education (but this does not have to be at a school).

Contents of Attendance Register

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register (Attendance and absence codes can be found in **Appendix 3**).

Guidance on School Day and School Year

Setting school term dates and holidays - GSSC as an academy trust is required to set the term dates of their school year.

School Day - Every school day must have two sessions divided by a break. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's governing body. The governing body has the power to revise the length of the school day as it sees fit. There is no requirement to consult parents on revisions to the school day but it can assist parents to do so.

School Year - Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. If a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions because of an unavoidable event, it should find a practical way of holding extra sessions. If it cannot find a practical way of doing this then it is not required to make up the lost sessions.

Attendance and Absence – Registration Period

- The Register is taken by 9.30am each day and pupil's attendance or absence is indicated in the register with the appropriate code (see Appendix 3).
- Pupils in attendance will be marked Present with / = am or \ = pm accordingly.
- The register will remain open until 10.00am.
- Therefore pupils arriving between 9.30am – 10.00am will be marked as late (Code L).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am will be marked absent as code U (meaning the pupil is in school but has missed the registration period).
- Any pupil arriving after 10.00am due to school transport will be marked as code Y.
- All pupils should ensure they check in at reception; class staff will be on hand when the school first opens in the morning at 8.45am.
- The register will open at 1.15pm and close at 1.30pm for the afternoon session.

If a pupil is absent and we have received no message from parents or carer, the office will telephone home on the first day of absence and record the reason for absence and the expected return date (of necessary following the protocol in Appendix 1).

Holidays in term time

From 1st September 2013 there is **NO** entitlement for parents to take their child on holiday during term time. In accordance with the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Holidays **cannot** be authorised for the following reasons:

- Because they are cheaper in term time than during school holidays
- Because the time is more convenient to the parents or carers

If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

Holidays **may** be authorised if:

- ✓ The family have an exceptional circumstance which the Headteacher feels can be justified:
For example:

- ✓ The timing is due to the parent's work operating a set "shut down" period in the year where all workers are required to holiday at the same time
- ✓ In rare situations where a parent is a member of an armed or uniformed service, where holiday is strictly non-negotiable

Parents/carers should contact the school directly if they feel there are exceptional circumstances that warrant taking their child out of school during term time.

If leave from school during term time is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days that the child can be away from school and the parent will be informed in writing.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents/carers should be aware that if they take their child on holiday in term time without the authorisation of the Headteacher they may be issued with a **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**.

Attendance concerns – Persistent Absentees

The Attendance Officer (AO) will track absences and meet regularly with the Deputy Head to discuss concerns.

The Department for education for persistent absentees is 10% meaning that pupils who drop below 90% will be highlighted and action taken as per Appendix 1. Due to the nature of GSSC regard will be taken in respect of medical conditions or reasonable explained absences and in these cases the situation will be monitored.

Long term absentees may find returning to school difficult. For some students a personalised reintegration plan may be needed.

Rewards/Incentives

Good attendance is acknowledged in form tutor periods, in assemblies and through certificates. Attendance is regularly monitored and good attendance is recognised through half-termly awards.. Certificates are issued half-termly termly for 100% attendance.

Can a school place a pupil on a part-time timetable?

As a rule, no. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

Appendix 1

Attendance protocol				
action	Who/when	record	script	Notes/tick
Day 1: First day call	Office am	Absence book		
Day 2: as above if no contact made or fails to return as expected	Office am	Absence book		
Day 3 if no contact, letter 1 sent home	office	AO file		
Day 5 if no response, hand deliver letter	AO/FLO	AO file	Glad I've been able to speak to you- we are concerned that ...hasn't been at school. Can you confirm ...will be in school tomorrow?	
Day 6 (if contact made) or 7 - Letter 2	AO/FLO	AO file		
Tracking – termly <90% and not medical speak with parent/carer. Monitor If necessary: Letter 1 Then Letter 2 Followed by contract meeting (Letter 3).	AO/SLT/FLO	SIMS sheet AO file	<p>Is there anything we can do to help?</p> <p>How can we raise attendance for ...? We will expect to see an improvement over the next 2 weeks, but please ask for help if we can do anything.</p> <p>We have noticed that ... has attended more regularly- congratulations on the improvement. We will continue to monitor to ensure this is maintained Situation is serious and needs urgently addressing. What are the barriers and is there anything school can do? We need a contract to show you are willing to continue to work on improving attendance. Attendance will be monitored closely for the next 2 weeks and if it does not improve, we will have to refer to EET. This could result in a penalty notice being issued which we all want to avoid.</p>	
No/insufficient improvement after 2 weeks: referral to EET	AO	Referral form copy to AO file		

Appendix 2: Letters (to be personalised according to circumstances)

Letter 1: 3 days

Dear

I am concerned thathas been absent for 3 days without a reason being given.

We have tried to contact you on(phone number) but have been unable to speak to you.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning; they miss out on teaching while they are away and are less prepared for future lessons.

Please call us on 01604 741960 to inform us of the reason for the absence and the expected date of return to school.

If you need any support with attendance please ask for the Attendance Officer or Extended Team.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Attack

Headteacher

Letter 2: Ongoing absence

Dear

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions thathas been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the dayswas absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning; they miss out on teaching while they are away and are less prepared for future lessons.

I am sure that you share my concern and would wish to work with us to improves attendance.

If we can help in any way, perhaps through the Attendance Officer or Extended Team, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Attack

Headteacher

Letter 3: No improvement

Dear

Re:

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern there has been no significant improvement in your child's attendance at school.

.....'s attendance is currently ...% This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in 's attendance, I must advise you that further absences as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If this is not provided, further absences will be unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance meeting. The time and date have been set for at..... It is important that you and attend this meeting for us to talk about the issues around poor attendance.

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me as soon as possible so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and the absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Education Entitlement Team, which could lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Atack

Headteacher

Letter 4: Application for term time holiday

Dear

I refer to your application for to be absent for days for a family holiday.

Time off school for holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow this **only** in exceptional circumstances such as:

- ✓ For service personnel or other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time
- ✓ When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

I have considered your request carefully, but it does not meet the criteria set out above and on this occasion I am unable to authorise 's absence.

I must advise you that if you do take your child out of school for this time, the absence will be unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Atack

Headteacher

Appendix 3

- **Absence and Attendance Codes**

The following are the national codes which enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.

The codes are:

- **Present at School**

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session.

A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with **code U**, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

- **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

- **Authorised Absence from School**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. 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.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical

evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

- **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

- **Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.