



**GUISELEY  
SCHOOL**

# *Attendance Policy*

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<b>Governors' committee</b>	Curriculum, Standards and Effectiveness
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Assistant Headteacher - Attendance

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Attendance Principles**

All schools across the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust (ALPT) recognise that good attendance is essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible. Each member and partner school within the ALPT has its own Attendance Policy written with the above statement in mind that underpins the Trust ethos.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

# Attendance Policy

## Section 1: Introduction, Ethos and Background

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement.

This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4) &(6) and 458(4)&(5);

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The policy takes in to account the DFE Guidance on Attendance (2022) and Improving School Attendance (2022) and operates within a series of principles that have been agreed between schools in the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust.

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

- Students must attend regularly to achieve their full potential and improve life chances.
- Students who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind.
- Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect your child's education.
- On average students who consistently miss 17 or more days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSEs.

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

- 98% = less than 4 days absent in one school year.
- 95% = less than 10 days absent in one school year.
- 90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year.
- 85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year.
- 80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year.

Department for Education (DFE) guidance is clear that the target for all school children should be 95% or over. Over a period of 5 school years, students with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while students with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year. While we recognise some children face additional barriers to attendance, we are committed to working with parents and carers to remove those barriers as we understand the importance of great attendance.

Our aim is to therefore is to encourage great attendance for all students at Guiseley School. We do this by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensuring that students feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of citizenship within our students
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
- Working with the Local Authority to ensure an appropriate level of support and challenge for all

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students

- Promoting daily contact for students who are not in school
- Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success
- Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition, this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school's response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines and is the culmination of detailed consultation with both Leeds City Council. It has been developed and agreed alongside the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust (ALPT) agreed principles to ensure consistency, fairness and clear decision making in relation to school absence.

## Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

At Guiseley School we are clear that attendance is everybody's responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, students, and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child has an attendance that meets or exceeds the Guiseley School target of 96%. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

### Parents/carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school and that they do not undertake periods of absence without good reason.

Parents/carers should ensure their child arrives to school before 8.30am. Any child arriving after the registers close at 0900 will receive an absence mark for the morning session.

Parents/carers should, wherever possible, arrange any medical/dental appointments outside school hours. If this is unavoidable, evidence of the appointments must be provided to school so that the absence can be authorised.

If a child is too ill to come to school (please see NHS guidance: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>) parents/carers must contact school via telephone before 8am and leave a message on the school's absence line during each day of absence.

Parents and carers should work with school to identify barriers to attendance including engaging in requests for meetings when attendance is flagged as a concern. Similarly, parents and carers should proactively engage in support offered, to prevent the need for formal intervention. Where formal intervention is required, parents and carers must engage to prevent the need for legal action. Parents/carers should not book holidays during term time. If parents/carers wish to take their child out of school during term time, they must submit an Exceptional Circumstances form (available on the school website) for the headteacher's consideration before the requested leave of absence.

### Headteacher

The Headteacher will consider any exceptional circumstances request for absence and choose whether to authorise based on the school's policy. This can be delegated to a senior leader in the Headteacher's absence.

### Assistant Headteacher (Attendance)

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will provide a strategic lead throughout the

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school by line managing key members of attendance staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution.

The Assistant Headteacher will also be responsible for quality assurance of all processes, data analysis and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will also work alongside the Local Authority to address attendance concerns and to agree a joined-up approach for severely absent pupils.

## **Pastoral Leaders**

Pastoral Leaders will have an overview of attendance and priorities within their key stage. Alongside the Assistant Headteacher and attendance team, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. In addition, Pastoral Leaders will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome these barriers.

Pastoral Leaders will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their key stage and will do so through assemblies, regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and rewarding excellent attendance as well as improvement.

Pastoral leaders will ensure they monitor and support attendance routines for vulnerable or persistent absentee students including alternatives to registration, absence calls and the quality assurance of trackers and other interventions.

## **Pastoral Teams**

Pastoral teams will support the Pastoral Leader in using data to identify priorities, recognise barriers to attendance and plan to overcome them. They will regularly make direct contact with home when students are absent from school and where absence is ongoing, the pastoral teams will provide a bridge between home and school and developing an understanding of the barriers to attendance and, through liaison with other colleagues in school, plan to overcome those barriers.

Pastoral teams will work directly with students to assess and review attendance, set targets, complete attendance trackers and review progress. Year Managers will be responsible for the overview of these cases and for effective communication with parents and carers.

Pastoral teams will also be integral to supporting, and challenging, students with poor punctuality, whether to school or lessons. Pastoral teams will be involved in the communication around attendance to staff, students and home including meetings with families, students and the Attendance/Wellbeing Officer.

## **Attendance Officer and Attendance and Wellbeing Officer**

The Attendance Officer plays a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the initial point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence either by text message, email or by phone call.

The Attendance Officer also monitors punctuality, communicating with home to determine the reasons for students arriving late to school where a reason has not already been provided.

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As well as the attendance of children in the school building, the Attendance Officer will also monitor and record the attendance all students attending any offsite learning opportunities.

The Attendance Officer also maintains and ensures the accuracy of all registers.

The attendance officer will engage with the Local Authority on legal interventions including leading on the 'Fast Track' part of the attendance system by monitoring data and trends, issuing warning letters, monitoring for improvement and following up the appropriate course of action.

The Attendance Officer will work with the Pastoral Leads and Assistant Head to identify a 'casework' cohort where additional support is required. In these cases, the Attendance Officer will track and log all actions and interventions and, where attendance remains persistently low, they will prepare the evidence for prosecutions. They will also be responsible for reporting children as missing education where this is appropriate.

The Attendance and Wellbeing Officer (AWO) will work with the attendance officer addressing first day absences and ensuring registers are accurate and will work closely with a caseload of families where the barriers to attending school have resulted in attendance below 80%

Both the Attendance Officer and Attendance and Welfare Officer will undertake or support home visits as is appropriate in line with attendance and safeguarding processes.

All Attendance Officer and Attendance and Wellbeing Officer communication will be logged on PARS or CPOMS where appropriate.

## **Administrators**

Administrators will ensure that registers are completed and that follow up systems are enacted where there are any concerns. They will respond to any gaps in attendance on a lesson-by- lesson basis by instigating safeguarding checks and notifying parents in the case of any unaccounted absence or other concerns.

The Administrative Assistant for 6<sup>th</sup> Form will ensure that morning registers are completed and accurate for Years 12 and 13. They will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence either by text message, email or by phone call.

## **Form Tutor**

Form tutors have a critical role in supporting their form group with regards to attendance, punctuality and target setting. As well as taking the register for morning registration they will be aware of general attendance patterns, reasons for absence, who the persistent absentees are in their form group and support all efforts to improve attendance.

The form tutor will be central in addressing initial concerns regarding attendance, having discussions around attendance, supporting students in their catch up and identifying any potential barriers to attendance.

Where appropriate, form tutors will escalate concerns, intelligence and information with regards to absence. Form Tutors will play an integral role in ensuring the planner reflects current attendance, attendance targets and that catch up systems have been administered and are being followed.

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### Class Teacher

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of every lesson, without exception. Class teachers should plan for and provide catch up work and have a dialogue with students about positive or negative attendance patterns and the impact on learning in their subject.

### SENDCo and Wellbeing Team

The SENDCo and Wellbeing Team (Safeguarding and Mental Health) will work closely with the Attendance Officer and AWO as well as the pastoral teams to ensure all barriers to attendance are removed as far as possible, while continuing to uphold the culture and ethos of the school.

Colleagues within these teams will have an input into attendance interventions, considering any reasonable adjustments where necessary. All referrals for part time programmes will be submitted to the Vulnerable Learners Group for agreement, safeguarding measures to be agreed, and ongoing monitoring.

Colleagues within these teams will refer families to any appropriate outside agencies who they believe can support them with improving attendance.

All colleagues within these teams will uphold the school's attendance policy to ensure all students have the best possible attendance.

### Local Authority

Where parents and carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the Local Authority have a statutory responsibility to uphold the rights of children and young people to full time education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action against parents.

After a 10-day continued period of absence. The Local Authority will send a letter to parents/carers warning them of a possible escalation to a fine or prosecution if attendance does not improve.

The Local Authority will work with the school to provide formal support including parenting contracts and Education Supervision Orders.

There are a number of statutory options available to the local authority for parents whose children miss school:

- Penalty notices, fines of £60, have been available to the local authority since 2007, but their use has increased since the change in legislation around term-time holidays. The local authority can prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court for non-payment of penalty notices, which can lead to a fine of up to £1000, a Parenting Order, and a criminal record.
- The local authority can apply to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order, which means that the local authority can act directly on behalf of the child to ensure they attend school, removing some parental rights.
- The local authority can also submit a case directly to the Magistrates Court. There are two types of such prosecution and, if found guilty of the most serious offence, parents can face a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a community rehabilitation order, or even a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

### Supporting Attendance

In order to support great attendance, we will record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report student attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. During lessons, we will also ensure

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registers are complete and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols.

Students with great attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated through the use of achievement points and, therefore, eligibility for our rewards programmes.

Students who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers. This will be done through a graduated response to absence across the year (see School Response to Absence). Attendance targets may be set through informal discussion, the use of therapeutic trackers, pastoral attendance trackers and the use of a Fast Track.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analyse the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for improvement.

Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify students who should be celebrated for great attendance or significant improvement

School will monitor absence rates on days of school consequences (i.e., detentions). While we would expect it to be rare, In the event of any patterns of concern, we reserve the right to not authorise absences on days those consequences are due to be served unless appropriate evidence can be provided.

## Term Time Absence and Requests for Leave

Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement by the Headteacher or those granted that level of authorisation by the Headteacher.

Parents do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time. We are committed to ensuring that children attend school unless there is an unavoidable reason for them not to - we recognise that in some exceptional circumstances parents may request leave during term-time and these requests will be considered as follows:

- The Headteacher will decide whether or not the absence should be authorised and the number of days.
- Exceptional Leave in term time will only be considered if parents or carers make a request to the school prior to the leave being taken. The request must explain why the leave they have asked for is 'exceptional' and why it is 'unavoidable'. Please be aware common leave requests that are not regarded as exceptional and unavoidable include family holidays, a relative's special birthday and family weddings abroad as examples

In the event that unauthorised leave is taken, then the school will consider referring to the local authority for the issuing of a fixed penalty fine.

**Please note, we cannot take into consideration the impact of other Local Authority school holidays, continental shift patterns or public service shift patterns when considering holiday and leave requests.**

The Attendance Policy operates within an agreed set of principles across the Aireborough Trust. As such, we may liaise with other schools within the Trust and the Local Authority to moderate decision-making



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processes and consistency of approach.

### Fixed Penalty Fines for holidays during term time

Under the latest Government Legislation parents / carers who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Authority and could face possible prosecution in court.

In Leeds, a penalty notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of five days or more within a twelve-week period and as an ALPT School we are fully committed to this policy.

The penalty notice includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absence. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be for the whole period of absence. So, the penalty would be the same for an absence of five days or ten days.

Fines are issued for each parent and each child so, for example, a family of four with two parents and two children will be fined a total of £240. The penalty will double if the notice is not paid within 21 working days. If it remains unpaid, it will be passed for prosecution at the Magistrates Court.

### Punctuality

Guiseley School are clear that the punctual arrival to school and lessons is a vital part of both attendance to school, and effective learning habits. We understand that sometimes students may be late to school for reasons that lie outside of their control, however, we take a 'no excuses' approach to punctuality as it is not for school staff to determine whose reasons are 'good enough'. Therefore, anybody arriving late to school for any reason will receive a break time detention and a negative comment.

### Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The Equality Act 2010 states schools must not discriminate against a pupil because of either additional needs or a disability. Guiseley School will take positive steps so that all pupils can access and participate in the education and other activities we provide.

In cases where students with poor attendance have SEN, disabilities, or other medical needs, and we feel a change of provision or support may be required, we will seek advice from the SENCo, Wellbeing Team and other professionals to work with parents/carers to support them in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

In cases where students are experiencing mental health difficulties, Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams will work with the student, parents/carers and professionals to ensure plans are in place to support the student in accessing school. In instances where a medical professional has written to school to confirm the student cannot attend school, the absence will be authorised on medical grounds.

While Guiseley School recognises that part-time timetables are occasionally necessary, we will only seek to utilise them as a last resort, and all applications for part time timetables must be approved through the Vulnerable Learners Group. Professional requests for reduced timetables will be considered as one factor within a wider eco-system and will be balanced with the professional judgement of school-based staff, parent voice and student voice.

Where Guiseley School are considering, or are asked to consider, a reduced timetable we will always look to establish which risk factors are behind the barriers to attendance and seek to develop and emphasise protective factors in school thereby reducing risk. In practice, this means we will look to consider

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reasonable adjustments in school, prior to reducing a student's educational entitlement, as this is consistent with our commitment that part time programmes should only be used as a last resort and must be regularly reviewed with a view to returning to full time education.

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### School Responses to Absence

At Guiseley School we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DFE guidance, we make a distinction between ‘authorised absence’ and ‘unauthorised absence’. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical or dental appointment with evidence</li> <li>• Family bereavement</li> <li>• 2 days of religious observance</li> <li>• Participating in a sporting activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truancy</li> <li>• Arriving late to school after the register has closed (0900)</li> <li>• Family holiday in term time</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Missed public transport</li> </ul>

***Absence due to illness will be authorised until attendance falls below 90%, at which point school is unable to authorise further absences without medical evidence. Medical evidence may be in the form of prescriptions and appointment cards or doctors’ notes.***

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

Trigger point	Maximum absence by year end	Trigger point hit in term 1	Trigger point hit in term 2	Trigger point hit in term 3
<b>3 days</b> = 15 hours of learning	98%	<b>Form tutor</b> monitors – discussion with students about catch up work and support for absence. Note in planner		
<b>5 days</b> = 25 lessons = 1 week of learning	97%	Immediate intervention with contact <b>from Pastoral Team</b> . Parents/carers made aware that further absences will generate supportive monitoring. Is there a medical/emotional issue? Can we support? Do they need to complete an IHP?	<b>Form tutor</b> monitors – discussion with students about catch up work and support for absence. Note in planner	
<b>7 days</b> absence = 35 lessons = 1.5 weeks of learning	96%	<b>Tracker</b> by pastoral team	Immediate intervention with contact <b>from Pastoral Team</b> . Parents/carers made aware that further absences will generate supportive monitoring. Is there a medical/emotional	Form tutor monitors – discussion with students about catch up work and support for latest absence. Note in planner

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			issue? Can we support? Do they need to complete an IHP?	
<b><u>10 days</u></b> = 45 lessons = 2 weeks of learning	95%	Fast Track begins where there are five days of unauthorised absence within a twelve-week period  Referral to Local Authority if Fast Track fails	Tracker by pastoral team	Immediate intervention with contact <b>from Pastoral Team.</b> Parents/carers made aware that further absences will generate supportive monitoring. Is there a medical/emotional issue? Can we support? Do they need to complete an IHP?
<b><u>15 days</u></b> = 75 lessons  = 3 weeks of learning	92%	Referral to Local Authority	Fast Track begins where there are five days of unauthorised absence within a twelve-week period  Referral to Local Authority if Fast Track fails	Tracker by pastoral team  Fast Track begins where there are five days of unauthorised absence within a twelve-week period  Referral to Local Authority if Fast Track fails

As there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough risk assessment process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and reasonable while ensuring it is consistent with this policy.

## Safeguarding & Responding to Absence

Safeguarding is the highest priority for all staff at Guiseley School. We recognise the clear relationship between children being in school and being able to effectively discharge our safeguarding duties. As DFE guidance states; when children are not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities school can provide and can become more vulnerable to harm. Therefore, the following steps are undertaken to ensure the safeguarding of all Guiseley School students:

- First day absence texts and calls
- Follow up phone calls if there is no response
- If a student has five days unauthorised absence we will undertake a home visit
- If a student has between five and ten days authorised absence, we may also undertake a home visit in order to support their return to school

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### Appendix 1: Guidance on authorising absence / leave requests

Leave categorisation	Authorised?	Number of days	Other information?
Death of immediate family member	Yes	5 + 1	Up to 5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required
Death of extended family member	Yes	1 + 1	One day + one day for funeral
Religious Observance	Yes	2	2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, consult with local place of worship
Hospital Appointment	Yes	1	Only authorised with evidence of dates and times of appointment
Medical / dental Appointment	Yes	.5	Only authorised with evidence of dates and times of appointment
Sports Representation	Yes*	HT's Discretion	* Representation at city, regional and above
Weddings	Yes	1	One day for immediate family

As a Trust, we recognise that there will always be exceptional circumstances that sit outside the confines of this policy. The Headteacher reserves the right to consider individual applications on the merits of each case.

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### Appendix 2: Coding

#### Attendance codes:

/ = present am \= present pm

B= offsite educational activity

C = leave of absence granted

D= Dual registered at another school

E = excluded

G = holiday, not approved

H = holiday approved by school

I = Illness (not medical appointment)

L= late before register closed

M = Medical appointment/dentist appointment (where evidence has been provided)

N= No reason for absence

O= absent without authorisation

P= Approved sporting activity

R = Religious observance

S = study leave

T = Traveller absence

U = arrived after registration closed

V= educational visit/trip

Y = unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (ie site closed, national emergency)