



# **GWINEAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*WRITTEN: FEBRUARY 2022*

*HEAD TEACHER: LEE GARDINER*

*AGREED WITH: FBP*

*REVIEW DATE: FEBRUARY 2025*

**GWINEAR COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**1. Aims**

Our school aims to meet its 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.

It is clearly beneficial for children to attend school as much as possible as this helps them achieve greater success at school. We aim to adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters, encouraging and supporting parents to take an active role in the schooling of their children so that we can improve levels of attendance and punctuality and reduce persistent absence.

**2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

[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.

### **3. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register is recorded on SIMS.

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The attendance register is stored electronically.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.05am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.35pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents can leave a message about attendance by ringing the school office on 01209 831303.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents must notify the school office about medical or dental appointments.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance - parents must complete a *Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time* form. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. A Lates Register is completed and monitored monthly by the School Administrator.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents**

A child's attendance record is reported annually in the written end-of-year report.

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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

Compassionate leave for family weddings/funerals

Local, national and international sporting competitions/events

Examples of **unauthorised absence** include:

Any type of shopping

Looking after siblings or unwell parents

Minding the house

Birthdays

Resting after a late night

Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

Persistent absence (PA) is monitored and reviewed at least termly by Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) along with PA protocols.

Parents can make a request for flexi-schooling – requests are reviewed by the Full Governing Body on a case by case basis.

Please note that if you are given permission for a leave of absence, that you or the other provider (if this is an absence related to sports events, rehearsals etc) have responsibility for the safeguarding of

your child during that time. Please also make sure that you have checked that any staff of outside providers have appropriate and current DBS checks.

### **4.2 Legal sanctions**

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The HT and EWO monitor pupil absence at least termly. A termly / yearly Attendance Report is sent to governors so that attendance data is monitored and evaluated against national averages. Attendance data is reviewed by senior leaders and governors and attendance headlines shared with staff.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2) and to continue to keep in contact with the school about the absence. The school will contact parents if their child/children are not in school and we have not heard from them. If we are unable to speak to the family on the telephone then we will arrange a home visit to make sure that everything is ok and everyone is safe.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaising with Cornwall Council who have the responsibility for issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.3 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMS.

### **7.5 Office staff**

Staff in the School Office are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record this information on SIMS using the comments box if necessary.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years in line with the Gwinear Policy Review Cycle.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	definition	scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Code	definition	scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances



## Gwinear School

Code	definition	scenario
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Code	definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

## Gwinear School

Code	definition	scenario
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Request for Leave of Absence Form

**GWINEAR SCHOOL**



### **REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM**

#### Section A

(Please read the notes on the back of this form before you fill it in.)

Name of Pupil(s)		Class(es)	
First Day of Absence:	Last day of absence from school:	Total number of SCHOOL days absent:	
Reason for requesting absence. Please include any information you would like us to consider.			

#### Section B

(If you are requesting absence for a family holiday and you are unable to take time off work during the school holidays, please complete this section, otherwise to Section C.) \* Please read notes on the reverse of this form.

Name of parent or carer whose job affects when you go on holiday.	
Name, Address and phone number of Employer.	
Employer can be contacted to confirm details	Yes / No
Please explain why it is difficult for you to take time off work during school holidays or attach your conditions of work.	

#### Section C

I have read the attached notes. The information I have given on this form is correct.	
Signed:	Parent/Guardian Date:

#### Section D (for school use only)

Request approved/not approved	Attendance:	Date:
Headteacher's signature:		Date:
Headteacher's Comments:		

Please return this form to the school office.

## Notes on family holidays

### Planning your holiday

We publish the dates of school terms well ahead. This is to help you plan your holidays. When you book your holiday, please check that it does not clash with the school term.

### Applying for absence because of a family holiday

The Government recommends that family holidays are taken outside school terms. If you have to take your family holiday during school term, please fill in the form over the page. Please do not assume that you will automatically get permission for the absence because you have filled in the form.

Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave in term time, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the holiday, the pupil's past attendance and the effects the absence will have on the pupil's learning. The Headteacher is unlikely to give permission simply because holidays cost less during term time.

If you are given permission for an educational visit, please note that you have responsibility for your child during that time.

Please wait to hear if the Headteacher agrees to your request. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

<p>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li> <li>• Compassionate leave</li> <li>• Days of religious observance</li> </ul>	<p>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any type of shopping</li> <li>• Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>• Minding the house</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> </ul>
---	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li><li>• External examinations</li><li>• When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resting after a late night</li><li>• Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li></ul>
---	---

#### **The value of regular attendance**

**Your child must attend school regularly, especially to gain qualifications for their future employment. Research shows that pupils perform better if their parents or carers emphasise the importance of attending school.**

#### **Your legal responsibilities**

**You have a legal duty to make sure your child attends school regularly and punctually. The school and the Local Authority monitor your child's attendance and will take action if it is poor.**

#### **Warning**

**If you take your child out of school without permission you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both. Alternatively, a penalty notice may be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice will result in Court action.**