

Gamesley Primary and Nursery School

Attendance and Absence Policy

September 2026



To be reviewed by the end of September 2027

003Statement of Intent

At Gamesley Primary and Nursery School, we believe that excellent attendance is fundamental to every child's success, wellbeing and sense of belonging. Pupils who attend regularly are more likely to achieve well academically, develop positive relationships, benefit from enrichment opportunities and enjoy positive emotional wellbeing.

We are committed to creating a culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility. We recognise that barriers to attendance can be complex and that some children and families may require additional support to secure good attendance. Our approach is therefore based on building positive relationships, identifying concerns early, working collaboratively with families and using support and intervention in a graduated and compassionate way.

We are committed to:

- Promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where children want to attend.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Identifying attendance concerns early and acting swiftly.
- Working in partnership with families to remove barriers to attendance.
- Providing timely support for vulnerable pupils.
- Ensuring attendance remains a key safeguarding priority.
- Celebrating and recognising good and improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance data regularly to identify trends and inform support.
- Meeting all statutory duties regarding school attendance.

Parents have a legal duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The school's Attendance Lead is **Mrs Corrin Firth**, who can be contacted via the school office.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has regard to:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Children Missing Education Guidance
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Complaints Procedure

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board will:

- Promote the importance of attendance.
- Monitor attendance information regularly.
- Hold school leaders to account for attendance outcomes.
- Ensure attendance remains a strategic priority.
- Review attendance data, including attendance of vulnerable groups.
- Ensure legal responsibilities are fulfilled.

The Headteacher will:

- Lead the school's attendance culture.
- Ensure effective implementation of this policy.
- Ensure attendance is prioritised across the school.
- Authorise leave of absence requests.
- Ensure suitable support is available for pupils experiencing attendance difficulties.

The Attendance Lead will:

- Monitor attendance daily.
- Analyse attendance patterns and trends.
- Coordinate attendance interventions.
- Work with families to remove barriers to attendance.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and external agencies.
- Coordinate attendance meetings.
- Support vulnerable pupils and families.
- Ensure accurate attendance coding.

Class teachers will:

- Promote the importance of attendance.
- Develop positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality.
- Raise concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Support pupils returning from absence.
- Contribute to attendance plans and reviews.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually.

- Informing school of absence on the first day.
- Providing reasons for absence.
- Attending attendance meetings when requested.
- Working collaboratively with school to improve attendance.
- Ensuring holidays are not taken during term time unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- Providing up-to-date contact information.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless they are genuinely unable to do so.
- Arrive on time.
- Engage positively with support provided to improve attendance.

3. Definitions

Attendance: Attendance refers to a pupil being present at school and ready to learn.

Authorised Absence: An absence approved by the school, including:

- Genuine illness
- Medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours
- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher

Unauthorised Absence: An absence which the school has not authorised, including:

- Family holidays during term time
- Shopping trips
- Birthday outings
- Oversleeping
- Unexplained absences
- Arriving after the register closes

Persistent Absence: A pupil whose attendance falls below 90%.

Severe Absence: A pupil whose attendance falls below 50%.

4. Attendance Expectations

The school attendance target is **96% or above**.

Attendance Thresholds:

98 – 100%	Excellent
96 – 97.9%	Expected
90 – 95.9%	Attendance Concern
Below 90%	Persistent Absence
Below 50%	Severe Absence

We expect pupils to attend every day unless they are too ill to do so.

5. The School Day

Primary School

- Gates open: 8:40am
- Registration: 8:45am
- Registration closes: 9:00am

Nursery

- Morning Session: 8:40am to 11:40am
- Afternoon Session: 12:20pm to 3:20pm

Pupils arriving after registration begins will receive a late mark. Pupils arriving after registers close will receive an unauthorised absence mark.

6. Attendance as a Safeguarding Priority

Attendance forms a key part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Persistent absence, severe absence, repeated lateness, patterns of absence and children missing education may indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Attendance information is routinely shared between the Attendance Lead, DSL and senior leaders.

Where attendance concerns raise safeguarding concerns, referrals may be made to appropriate agencies in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

7. Absence Procedures

Parents must notify the school by 8:45am on the first day of absence.

School may request:

- Telephone contact
- Email communication
- Medical evidence where concerns exist about repeated absence

Where no reason is received:

- First-day contact will be made.
- Additional contacts will be attempted.
- Home visits may be undertaken.
- Safeguarding procedures may be initiated where appropriate.

The school will always seek to:

- Establish the reason for absence.
- Safeguard the pupil.

- Determine whether the absence is authorised.
- Apply the correct attendance code.

8. Attendance Register

The school uses Arbor to maintain attendance records.

Registers are completed:

- At the start of the morning session
- At the start of the afternoon session

Registers are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Attendance records will be retained in line with data retention regulations.

9. Leave of Absence

The Headteacher may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Parents must apply in writing before the proposed absence.

Each request will be considered individually.

Family holidays do not normally constitute exceptional circumstances and are unlikely to be authorised.

The Headteacher's decision will take account of:

- The circumstances of the request
- Attendance history
- Educational impact
- Current attendance levels

10. Medical Appointments

Parents should arrange appointments outside school hours wherever possible.

Where this is not possible:

- Evidence of appointments may be requested.
- Pupils should attend before and after the appointment whenever possible.

11. SEND, Health Needs and EBSA

The school recognises that some pupils experience barriers to attendance due to:

- SEND
- Physical health conditions
- Mental health difficulties
- Anxiety
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Where these barriers exist, the school will:

- Work closely with parents.
- Consider reasonable adjustments.
- Develop support plans.
- Implement phased reintegration where appropriate.
- Engage external professionals.
- Monitor impact regularly.

The school will always seek supportive solutions before considering enforcement.

12. Children Missing Education

The school will follow statutory Children Missing Education procedures where:

- A pupil repeatedly fails to attend.
- A pupil cannot be located.
- School has concerns regarding a child's whereabouts.

All reasonable enquiries will be made before removal from the school roll.

The Local Authority will be informed where required.

13. Attendance Intervention and Graduated Support

Attendance support will follow a graduated approach.

Stage 1: Early Identification (Attendance Below 96%)

- Attendance monitoring begins.
- Informal discussion with family.
- Identification of concerns.
- Support offered.

Stage 2: Attendance Concern (Attendance Below 93%)

- Attendance meeting.
- Attendance Action Plan.
- Review targets established.

Stage 3: Persistent Absence (Attendance Below 90%)

- Formal attendance review meetings.
- Increased monitoring.
- Multi-agency support considered.
- Attendance contract where appropriate.

Stage 4: Severe Absence (Attendance Below 50%)

- Intensive support plan.

- Frequent review meetings.
- Local Authority involvement.
- Safeguarding review where appropriate.

Stage 5: Legal Intervention

Where support has not secured improvement, legal processes may be considered in line with Local Authority and DfE guidance.

14. Working with Parents

The school believes strong partnerships with families are essential.

We will:

- Communicate regularly and respectfully.
- Listen to concerns.
- Seek solutions collaboratively.
- Offer practical support where available.
- Signpost families to external services.

Support will always be considered before enforcement action.

15. Persistent and Severe Absence

Particular attention will be given to pupils who are:

- Persistent absentees
- Severely absent
- Children in Need
- Looked After Children
- Young carers
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils eligible for Free School Meals

Support may include:

- Individual attendance plans
- Mentoring
- Pastoral support
- Early Help involvement
- Multi-agency working
- Alternative provision arrangements where appropriate

Where attendance remains exceptionally low, absence may be considered as part of wider safeguarding concerns.

16. Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention

The school follows Derbyshire Local Authority procedures regarding penalty notices.

Where a pupil accumulates unauthorised absences meeting the national threshold and support has not secured sufficient improvement, the school may request legal intervention.

This may include:

- Notice to Improve
- Penalty Notice
- Parenting Contract
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution under the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notice amounts will be applied in accordance with current national regulations and Local Authority guidance.

17. Monitoring and Analysis

Attendance data will be reviewed:

- Weekly by the Attendance Lead
- Half-termly by senior leaders
- Termly by governors

Analysis will include:

- Whole-school attendance
- Year groups
- Vulnerable groups
- Persistent absence
- Severe absence
- Lateness
- Comparison with local and national figures

Interventions will be reviewed for effectiveness and adapted where necessary.

18. Recognition and Reward

The school recognises and celebrates good attendance.

Recognition may include:

- Weekly class awards
- Attendance badges
- Celebration assemblies
- Positive communication with families
- Recognition of significant attendance improvements

The school values improvement as well as high attendance.

19. Staff Training

All staff will receive attendance training appropriate to their role.

Training will cover:

- Attendance expectations
- Attendance and safeguarding
- Legal responsibilities
- Attendance monitoring processes
- Barriers to attendance
- EBSA and anxiety-related absence
- Effective family engagement

20. Deletion from Roll

The school will only remove a pupil from its admission register in accordance with current legislation.

The Local Authority will be notified where required.

All statutory procedures relating to Children Missing Education will be followed before deletion from roll is considered.

21. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Governing Board.

Policy adopted: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Appendix A: Attendance Monitoring Pathway

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Attendance	Action
96%+	Universal monitoring and celebration
Below 96%	Initial contact and support offered
Below 93%	Attendance meeting and action plan
Below 90%	Persistent absence procedures implemented
Below 75%	Enhanced support and regular reviews
Below 50%	Severe absence procedures and multi-agency involvement
Continued unauthorised absence	Notice to Improve and potential legal intervention

Our aim is always to identify concerns early, provide support quickly and work collaboratively with families so that every child attends school regularly, feels safe and can achieve their full potential.