

# Linden Primary School



## Attendance Policy

### Aims and objectives

At Linden Primary School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

### Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### Consultation

Local Authority, Governors

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Annually X                      Every 3 years                       Other  \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher X

Governing Body X

### Dates

Reviewed:              September 2024

Next Review:         September 2025

## **Roles and responsibilities**

**Parents/carers** are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils** are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

**The governing body/academy trust board** are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

**The headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader)** (*Sasha Davidson*) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer** (*Sue Evans*) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (*or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher*) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher/form tutor** is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office

**School administration/office staff** are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

### **School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
  - 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Your child should be at school by 9am but not before 8.45am, unless they are attending breakfast club, to be ready to go into class at 8.45am. The register is taken twice a day. Morning registration is at

9am. If a child arrives after the gates are locked they will receive an 'L' code up until 9.30am. If a child arrives after 9.30am they will receive a 'U' code. This is considered an unauthorised absence.

### **Lateness at the end of the School Day**

The School expects prompt collection of all children at the end of the school day (3.10pm Infants and 3.15pm Juniors). However, we do appreciate that unforeseen circumstances (e.g. traffic, illness) may occur from time to time. We would ask parents to advise school as soon as possible if this happens, by phoning **01452 527 020**. The school closely monitors late collections. Pupils who remain uncollected after 3.30pm will be admitted into After-School Care whilst their parents are contacted to collect them. The parent / carer will incur a £5.00 non-booking fee per child in addition to the session charge. If this persistently happens, we will initially meet with you to discuss this. If no improvement is seen, this may result in a charge for child care.

### **Absence**

We expect parents to notify the school every morning of absence by 9.30am, unless the length of absence is known in advance. We will contact you if your child has not arrived in school by 9.30am and no message has been left. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. You may leave a telephone message (01452 527020) or e-mail to [admin@linden.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@linden.gloucs.sch.uk).

At Linden Primary School we recognise the clear links between attendance and progress and attendance and safeguarding children. Pupil's attendance rates will be monitored.

If there is a problem with a pupil's attendance, the parents or carers will be informed of the school's concerns and will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. The school will always work with parents and carers and pupils to try to remedy the problem.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

### **Any pupils that arrive after 9.00am have to enter the school through the main entrance.**

If a child arrives after the gates are locked they will receive an 'L' code up until 9.30am. If a child arrives after 9.30am they will receive a 'U' code. This is considered an unauthorised absence.

The school may consider referring to Gloucestershire Council for legal action (see legal sanctions information section) if there are a series of unauthorised late marks and parents fails to engage with guidance and support.

### **Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

- In cases where the absence at registration is due to an early morning medical appointment, the absence will be recorded as authorised as long as prior notification has been received. Evidence of appointments will be required to support the absence. Appointment cards or a letter would support this.
- However, we encourage parents/carers 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. Parents are requested that their child attends prior to an appointment and to return their child to school immediately afterwards. Evidence will be requested to support a necessary absence.
- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define '**exceptional circumstances**' as one off events which are unavoidable.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible via the Schoolzine app where parents can access the form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (*see definition above*) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

### Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Please see the school's absence protocol below:

|  | Action   | By whom   |
|--|--|---|
| 9am register taken   | N code inputted into SIMS if child is absent   | Class teacher   |
| 9.10am   | Attendance officer goes to each classroom and checks with class teacher to confirm pupils that are absent based on information on class registers.           | Attendance Officer  |
| 9.15am   | Class registers are checked against daily list of messages received on the school answer machine, phone calls and e-mails received regarding school absence. | Attendance Officer  |
| If a child is still absent at 9.30am and we have not received any contact from a parent we will: | Attempt to make contact with parent by phone following the order of emergency contacts. Repeated attempts will be made during the morning.                   | Attendance Officer / Parent Support Advisor / Deputy Head     |
| If no contact is made, we will:  | The school will risk assess and if deemed necessary will carry out a home visit to make contact with the parent/child (where staff are available to do so).  | Parent Support Advisor / SLT Staff will always visit in pairs |
| If we see the parent and child at home, we will:   | Discuss reasons for absence and where possible, bring the child into school.   | Parent Support Advisor / SLT Staff will always visit in pairs |
| If we have carried out a home visit and do not see the parent and child at home, we will:        | Report the child missing to the Police.  | Parent Support Advisor / SLT Staff will always visit in pairs |

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school follow the absence protocol.

## **Strategies for promoting attendance**

### **Celebrating good attendance:**

Weekly celebration assembly celebrates weekly class attendance. KS1 and KS2 trophy awarded to class with highest attendance.

### **Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing**

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels *for example, in the child's end of year school report*
- Monitor attendance and absence data, weekly, half termly and annually across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, parent support advisor and SENCo to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Use the school's graduated pathway of pastoral support to ensure pupils receive provision if required
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

### **Legal sanctions**

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

**Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, and as a minimum annually by the Attendance Champion and Head teacher.



## Legal sanctions

The school can request Gloucestershire County Council to issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age (school children become of compulsory school age in the term following their 5th birthday. Absences will then be regarded as unauthorised).

Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £120 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e., lives with and looks after the child