

Bledington Primary School

Attendance Policy



(In conjunction with The North Cotswolds Cluster group of schools)

Please also refer to our Safeguarding, SEND, Health & Safety, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities and Admissions Policies which are all available on our website

<https://www.bledington.gloucs.sch.uk/policies/>

Date of Ratification: 31.03.17 08.07.21 09.10.24	Updated: 28.04.21 15.05.23 25.09.24	Signed: Co- HEADTEACHERS  <i>A Ziebeck</i> CHAIR OF GOVERNORS <i>K Dainty</i>
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Safeguarding Statement

At Bledington Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Bledington Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Bledington Primary School & North Cotswold School Partnership Attendance Policy

At Bledington Primary School it is recognised that the responsibility for promoting good attendance and punctuality is shared by all staff, governors, parents and carers and the pupil.

We expect all pupils to attend every session of every day that the school is open.

As a school we aim to maintain a minimum attendance rate of 97% and maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance. Working together to put the right support, at the right time, in conjunction with staff and parents we aim to remove any barriers to attendance. This policy has been produced in conjunction with other North Cotswold Primary Schools, following advice from the Local Authority (LA). [Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.
- Builds resilience and self-motivation

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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Information About Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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

Parental responsibility:

Parents and carers should:

- Advise school of any planned absence using the Request for Absence Form (Appendix 1).

- Ring school on the first morning of every absence to state the reason for the absence and the date the child is expected to return to school.
- Keep school updated by telephone or email if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Make sure their children attend school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered and accepted.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments out of school hours, or during school breaks.
- Understand that there is no entitlement for parents to take pupils on holiday during term time and that holidays within term time are not an automatic right.
- Ensure that their children arrive in school on time. It is important to be on time, as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions, organise schoolwork or for children to use this as work improvement time. If your child misses this short but vital session, his/her work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals disrupt the whole class and the late child is often embarrassed to arrive late. If your child arrives after registration it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. (See appendix 2 Fixed Penalty Notice Leaflet)

School's responsibility:

The school shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences with phone calls as soon as possible.
- Check for patterns of absence in order to reduce it.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, on the school website and in the Home-School agreement.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on his/her annual school report.
- Let parents know if we have concerns regarding their child's attendance and offer support and advice. (See Appendix 3 Attendance Intervention)
- Ensure that if poor attendance continues following intervention/support a referral will be made to our Attendance Support Officer (ASO) who will consult with the LA's Education Entitlement and Inclusion team who will consider taking legal action under the s444(1) of the 1996 Education Act. (See Appendix 4 Prosecution Leaflet)

Headteacher's responsibility

The Headteacher shall:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data and report it to Governors.
- Oversee attendance policy and procedures

- Monitor the impact of strategies used.
- Request the issue of fixed penalty notices.

Attendance Officer's responsibility

The school attendance officer shall:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keep accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and report concerns about attendance to the headteacher. Work with school staff e.g. pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENDCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advise the headteacher when to request fixed-penalty notices.

Individual teacher responsibility

The class teacher shall:

- Record attendance on a daily basis in the morning (by 9:00am) and afternoon (by 1:10pm)
- Use the correct codes to show whether a pupil is present or absent by submitting the information to the school office

Governing Body Responsibility

The Governors shall:

- 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

School Processes

School times

The school gate opens at 8.45am every morning and closes at 8.55am. Children should be in class ready for registration and morning tasks by 9.00am.

Registration

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

- Registration will take place between 9.00 and 9.10 for the morning session and between 1.00 p.m. and 1.10 p.m. (after lunch break) for the afternoon session.
- Pupils arriving during registration will be marked with an **L** (late), which denotes that the pupil is present. Registration will close 10 minutes after the register has been taken. Unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness the pupil will be marked with a **U**, which

denotes an unauthorised absence. If a pupil is registered with ten U's in a ten-week period a Notice to improve can be issued by the Local Authority.

- If the child is late arriving to school, the parent/carer should report to the office.

The marking of registers will be in accordance with the set attendance codes. (See Appendix 5 Attendance Codes)

End of the school day:

Children should be collected promptly from the playground at 3.15pm unless they are attending an after-school activity (in which case they will finish at 4.15pm). In the unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day, we shall take him/her to our school office. If we have been unable to contact parents/carers or any of the given emergency contacts by that time, the duty social worker from the Children and Families team will be contacted.

Absences

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the Department for Education and, in some circumstances, to the LA. Only school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not, and is not obliged to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

Authorised absence is when a pupil:

- is absent with the prior permission of the school
- has suffered a family bereavement
- has been excluded
- Illness and non-routine medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil and their parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the appropriate 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
- A crisis; e.g. housing, flooding, respite care etc.

Unauthorised absence is when:

- a pupil is absent and no explanation, or an unacceptable explanation, is offered;
- a pupil arrives after the registration period has closed without an acceptable reason;
- a pupil is away from school on a family holiday.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

Appointments

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified using the Request for Absence Form (Appendix 1) Pupils leaving school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again, for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

Frequent absences for Medical reasons

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. We work in collaboration with our medical partners and invite relevant medical professionals to Team Around the Family meetings to support attendance for pupils.

Persistent and Severe absence

The persistent absence threshold is set at 10% by the government. This means that any pupil who is absent for 38 sessions (19 days) of school will be classified as persistently absent. Severe absence is when a pupil misses 50% or more of the school 190 sessions (95 days). The school will work with the parent and pupil to address any attendance concerns and may also call upon the expertise of the Parent Support Advisor, the Educational Welfare Officer, EIS (GCC Education Inclusion Service) or, where relevant, medical professionals, to help improve a pupil's attendance.

Term-time holiday

Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to time off in term time and the school can request a Fixed Penalty Notice from the LA if absence is recorded as an unauthorised holiday. (G code). Parents must request a 'Request for Leave during term time' form if they are planning a term-time holiday. This form clearly states that

- Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty amount is £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1st September 2024), the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.
- Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
- Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.

If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

A written warning of this will usually be issued, in the first instance, by the school. (See Appendix 2 Fixed Penalty Notice)

School procedures

School registers are recorded on SIMS, the school's Information Management System. Once the registers are closed the school secretary checks the registers for missing marks or unexplained absences.

Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.30am a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. (Parents/carers will be asked to follow up with a written note on their child's return to school.) All telephone messages will be recorded on SIMS.

If school have been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is no response a reminder will be sent on the 6th day of absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and school will refer to the Attendance Support Officer. If school have been unable to make contact after the 10th school day of absence the Headteacher will report the pupil as a 'Child Missing Education' to the LA who will enforce their missing Child Missing Education protocol.

Where the register shows 6 separate late marks either during or after registration over a 6-week period the school will contact the parent/carer to discuss the reasons for the lateness.

Where the register shows 10 separate 'late after registration' marks (**U**) over the last 10 weeks, school can request the issue of a Notice to Improve to the parent(s). In this situation, an NTI should be issued ahead of requesting a PN.

Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the Headteacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues and, if appropriate, refer to the Parent Support Advisor or the Attendance Support Officer. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is continued unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at Shire Hall.

The Law; 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Make links to other professionals, such as Early Help, medical professionals or community social workers to support pupils and their families

- Work collaboratively with the local inclusion teams, including outcomes co-ordinators to improve attendance for identified pupils
- Use parenting contracts to improve 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

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child gets an education. 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, for example a person who lives with and looks after the child

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

You can be given one or more of these but the council does not have to do this before prosecuting you.

Parenting Order

This means you have to go to parenting classes. You'll also have to do what the court says to improve your child's school attendance.

Education Supervision Order

If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order.

A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well.

School Attendance Order

You'll get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child is not getting an education. You have 15 days to provide evidence that you've registered your child with the school listed in the order or that you're giving them home education. If you do not, you could be prosecuted or given a fine.

Fine (Notices to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

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.

Prosecution

You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months.

Leavers

If your child is leaving Bledington Primary School, other than to go on to Secondary School, parents/carers are asked to:

- give the school full information about their plans, including date of move; new address – or at least the town you will be moving to; new school and start date, when known; and reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office).
- confirm the school has your current mobile phone number.
- take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily arrange for records to be transferred.
- let us know when you move.

Children missing education

When pupils leave, if parents/carers have not given us the above information, and cannot be contacted, then the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a duty to carry out investigations that include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. When parents/carers provide the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Strategies

To support our attendance policy we:

- will treat attendance as a priority;
- apply timely intervention/support and where necessary, if poor attendance continues, refer to the local authority's Education, Entitlement and Inclusion team who will consider legal sanctions. (See appendix 3 Attendance Intervention)
- promote good attendance at every opportunity;
- always contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence;
- reward and celebrate good and improved attendance;
- set attendance targets for the school
- keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level;
- make good use of attendance data by specific analysis;
- notify Governors of attendance levels at each meeting of the full governing body;

- provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children, where they feel valued and welcomed, and that their presence in school is important.

Criteria for success

- Meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.
- Whole school attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, LA etc
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

Please find the following Appendices below

Appendix 1 Request for Leave during Term time

Appendix 2 Fixed Penalty Notice leaflet

Appendix 3 Attendance Intervention

Appendix 4 Prosecution Leaflet

Appendix 5 Attendance Codes

Appendix 1

Request for Leave during Term Time

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT(S)/CARER(S)

A Request for Leave during Term Time form must be completed and returned to the School Office if you intend to take your child(ren) out of school during term time. This should be completed prior to any absence.

Pupil	
Name	
Date of Birth	
Year	
Class/Form	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No	Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No
Signature		Signature	
Printed name		Printed name	
Date		Date	

To establish if your reasons for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, please give as much detail as possible (including your destination).

The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form (please continue with additional information on a separate sheet if required)

Our records will reflect that you will still proceed with this absence on an unauthorised basis, however, should you decide not to take your child out of school at this time, please let us know as soon as possible.

Reasons for request:

Information for parents/carers

- *'Improving attendance is everyone's business'*, and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
- Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September 2024 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1st September 2024) the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Leave of absence authorised for the dates specified above. Please ensure your child returns to school promptly following the	Signature of headteacher:	Date:
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	absence, as failure to do so may result in their removal from the school roll.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Leave of absence unauthorised for the dates specified above.</p> <p>Should your child be absent on the dates specified above, these dates will be marked as unauthorised.</p> <p>This absence may result in a penalty notice being issued by the LA on behalf of the school.</p>	Signature of headteacher:	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	Signature of headteacher:	Date:

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No	Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No
Date sent		Date sent	

- Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
- Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.
- If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

Request for Leave during Term Time

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEADTEACHER

Pupil Name	
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Date of Birth	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

Information for parents/carers

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- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
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- Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.

If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

What is the cost of the fine?

For the first offence within a rolling three-year period, the Penalty Notice allows you 21 days to pay an £80 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £160. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, the LA will usually initiate legal proceedings against you.

For a second offence within a rolling three-year period, there is no opportunity to pay the fine at the lower amount. Instead, the fine will be at £180. If there is a request for a third penalty notice, prosecution will be considered if two penalty notices have been served in any rolling three-year period.

What happens if I do not pay the fine?

You will have 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to pay the fine in this timeframe, the LA will usually initiate legal proceedings against you for failing to secure regular attendance for your child registered at a school. If you are convicted of this offence, there are several possible sentences, including a fine of up to £1,000.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

What happens if the Penalty Notice is paid, but my child still misses school?

Parents/carers are not liable for prosecution for their child's school attendance for the period in question once the Penalty Notice is paid. However, prosecution may be considered for further periods of absence not covered by the notice.

For more information, please contact the
Education Inclusion Service:
Telephone: 01452 427274
Email: attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Notices to Improve and Penalty Notices



Information for Parents and Carers

Updated August 2024

Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 gives powers to the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices when a parent or carer is considered capable of but has failed to secure their child's regular school attendance and/or punctuality.

Why are Penalty Notices used?

Missing school can impact on children's academic attainment, disrupt school routines, and affect the continuity of their learning. Missing school can seriously affect a child's longer-term life opportunities and their ability to reach their full potential.

If your child fails to attend school regularly and punctually, and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, you are guilty of a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid, it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Penalty Notice means you avoid the potential danger of prosecution and subsequent conviction.

What is a Notice to Improve

You may receive a Notice to Improve notification in your email from the Local Authority (LA) when your child's absence has been marked as unauthorised for 10 sessions within 10 weeks. The sessions do not need to be consecutive. The weeks may be in different terms.

The Notice to Improve will set out the school's expectations with regards to your child's attendance during the notification period.

When might a Penalty Notice be issued?

You may face a Penalty Notice for the following reasons:

- If your child is absent from school, without authorisation from the Headteacher, for the purposes of a holiday.

For a holiday taken in term time, there is no requirement for a school to issue a Notice to Improve notification or warning notice.

- If your child is persistently late for school, after the register has closed and does not have authorisation from the headteacher.
- If your child is absent from school and the school has been unable to find out the reason for the absence.
- If your child is absent from the school and there are no exceptional circumstances for the absence for the Headteacher to authorise the absence, in line with the school's policy.
- If your child, following an exclusion, is found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion. The school will have sent you a letter at the time of the exclusion detailing your responsibilities during this period. **For this penalty notice, the cost will be £60 for the 21 days after it is issued. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £120.**

How is a Penalty Notice issued?

Penalty Notices are issued by the LA at the request of the school. Fines are usually issued to **each parent for each child**.

A parent is defined in Education Law as:

- All natural parents, whether married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

The fact that you do not live with the child is not a defence against securing their attendance at school.

You will receive the Penalty Notice by post to your home address with instructions on how to pay.

Appendix 3 Attendance Intervention

What can you do to help?

Take an interest in your child's education.

- Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school.
- If your child is missing school or is seemingly unhappy, you should discuss your concerns with your child.
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school, but be on the alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as bullying or problems with school work.

Contact the school as soon as possible when a concern is identified so that you can work with them to resolve any difficulties.

Be willing to engage with any support offered by the school or Gloucestershire County Council Support Services.

Make sure your child arrives at school on time for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

If your child is ill or absent for any other reason, contact the school on the first day of absence.

Follow the school's procedures for notifying absence, and always let the school know of any days that your child is unable to attend.

Updated November 2020

It all adds up!

Attending school everyday gives your child the best chance of success. **100%**

Attending **4½ days** a week = **4 weeks** learning missed per year **90%**

Attending **4 days** a week = **8 weeks** learning missed per year **80%**

Attending **3½ days** a week = **12 weeks** learning missed per year **70%**

80% attendance adds up to missing **2 full years** of education over their school life!

Can they afford to keep missing out?

Every Minute Counts!

Being late for school reduces learning time.

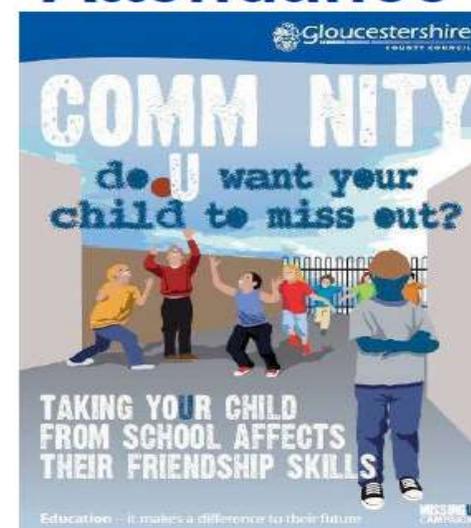
5 minutes late every day = **3 days** of learning missed per year.

15 minutes late every day = **9 days** of learning missed per year.

Arriving late can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher, and the other children in the class.



School Attendance



Information for Parents and Carers

Why is it important for children not to miss school?

Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending regularly. If children do not attend school regularly they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up. Employers want to recruit people who are reliable. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on in life.

What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child?

Research shows children who are not regularly attending school are:

- More likely to become involved in, or be a victim of crime and anti-social behavior.
- More likely to fall behind due to the strong link between attendance and achieving good results.
- Less likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs (grades 9-5) compared with those with less than 8 days absence.
- More likely to have increased levels of anxiety due to inconsistencies and uncertainty in their routine.
- More likely to have reduced self esteem due to finding learning increasingly hard having missed out on key information.



What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

If your child fails to attend regularly - even if they miss school without you knowing - the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

Schools will notify you if your child's attendance level is a concern and look to work with you to put in place steps to improve it. If attendance continues to require improvement then schools will look to initiate an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM).

The AIM is the start of the legal process. It is important you engage with the process and work with the support provided to meet the agreed targets. These targets will be reviewed and progress evaluated at a review meeting. If satisfactory progress is made then targets will either be considered met or adjusted until attendance is satisfactory. If progress is not made then you may be referred to the LA for legal intervention.

You run the risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted in court. If this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

When is absence authorised?

There may be times when your child has to miss school because they are unwell. If your child becomes ill you should notify the school immediately and follow the school's absence procedures.

Children may have to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time. However, you should, whenever possible, try to make routine appointments such as dental check-ups during the school holidays or after school hours. Schools have the right to request medical evidence to validate absences for medical reasons.

If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible. Absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences will only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of absence that may be considered as exceptional circumstances include family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observance. The decision on whether to authorise absence is made at the headteacher's discretion.

For more information

For more information you can contact the Local Authority's Education Inclusion Service at:

Phone: 01452 427274

Email: Attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning



that your child was absent from school or that there were other reasons for them not attending school e.g., that they were being bullied at the time.

Sentencing

If you have been convicted of the offence for which you have been summonsed, the magistrates have the power to impose penalties as follows:

- A fine of up to £1,000
- A fine of up to £2,500 and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months

Costs may also be awarded against you.

Fines and costs are collected by the court bailiff.

Advice

The officer dealing with your case has specialist knowledge and experience in the courts. If you require legal advice, lists of solicitors are available at the Citizens Advice Bureau. Visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk for further guidance.

Parents are strongly advised to seek legal help at the earliest opportunity. This may reduce delay and expense in your case.

For more information, please contact the
Education Inclusion Service:
Telephone: 01452 427274
Email: attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning



Prosecution for Non-Attendance at School



Information for Parents and Carers

Updated August 2024



The Law

The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.'

The offence is called a 'strict liability' offence. This means that if you are the parent of the child, and that child is on roll at a school and they have not attended regularly, then the court must find you guilty of the offence, unless you have a defence.

A parent is defined in Education Law as:

- All natural parents, whether married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

The fact that you do not live with the child is not a defence against securing their attendance at school.

The Defences

For any case brought before the magistrates under section 444, there are only the following defences:

- **The child had a leave of absence**
Your child had the Headteacher's permission to be absent. You could prove this by producing a letter from the Headteacher.
- **The child was too ill to attend school**

Sickness means that your child was not fit for school on the dates listed on your summons. You could prove this by producing a medical certificate or letter from your child's doctor or consultant.

- **The child was unavoidably absent**

There were exceptional circumstances preventing your child from attending school during all the dates listed on the summons. This may be difficult to prove.

- **The child was absent for any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs**

Your child was absent because of your religious observance – not your child's. You could prove this with a letter from your minister of religion. It is unlikely that this defence would apply to all the dates on your summons.

- **The school is not within 'walking distance' of the child's home, and no suitable alternative arrangements have been made by the Local Authority (LA)**

For a child under 8 years old, this distance is 2 miles; for a child 8 years old and over, this distance is 3 miles. If this is the case, and the LA has failed to provide alternative arrangements, you could prove this with copies of your correspondence with the LA. You should seek legal advice if you plan to use this as a defence.

- **The child has no fixed abode, and the parent can prove that they were travelling for the purposes of obtaining work**

This means that you are a Traveller, and on the dates listed on your summons, you were travelling to seek work or were working. You could prove this with a witness who could explain to the court that this was what you were doing.

Appendix 5 Attendance Codes

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity (present)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending another establishment)	Not counted in possible attendance
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday agreed	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity (present)
L	Late (before the registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity (present)
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Education visit or trip	Approved Education Activity (present)
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity (present)
X	Non-compulsory school age students not expected to attend	Not counted in possible attendance
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendance

Written 09.09.15 Updated 31.03.2017, 28.04.21, 15.05.23, 25.09.24