

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Aims**

Current research has established a clear link between attendance and a student's academic attainment. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no students are deprived of their educational opportunities, by either their own non-attendance, or that of other students, in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities for all.

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in the school is Matt Druce, Assistant Headteacher (Student Progress), ([mdruce@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:mdruce@gillotts.org.uk)). Parents can contact the Attendance Officer by phone (01491 636812) or email ([attendance@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:attendance@gillotts.org.uk)). If you want support with attendance, please contact your child's Housebase:

Darwin 01491 636803 [darwinhousebase@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:darwinhousebase@gillotts.org.uk)

Orwell 01491 636802 [orwellhousebase@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:orwellhousebase@gillotts.org.uk)

Pankhurst 01491 636804 [pankhursthousebase@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:pankhursthousebase@gillotts.org.uk)

### **Principles**

We believe that good attendance and punctuality are a crucial factor in enabling students to benefit from the education we offer. We will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students and to identify and address any problems as quickly as possible. Our goal is 100% attendance for all students.

We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish good home-school links and communication systems for those occasions when there are concerns about attendance. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

The School will ensure that students feel happy coming to school and are treated with dignity and respect irrespective of their academic and social abilities.

This attendance policy reflects Education law and guidance produced by the DfE.

### **Criteria for Successful Practice**

#### **Gillotts expects that students:**

- Will attend school regularly
- Will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- Will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school

#### **Gillotts expects that parents:**

- Will ensure that their child attends school, regularly and on time
- Will contact the school as soon as it is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend school, and certainly on the first day of absence
- Will ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day

- Will contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is best not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

**Parents and students should expect the following from Gillotts:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Early contact with parents when a child fails to attend without providing good reason
- Prompt action on any problem notified to us
- The referral of specific issues to supporting agencies where appropriate

**Responsibilities**

**Class Teachers will:**

- Follow the school's attendance procedure (Attendance and punctuality SOP)
- Follow the school procedures to ensure that the electronic registration of students is completed accurately in each lesson, including recording of lateness
- Monitor the attendance of individuals within a class and inform the relevant Head of House where patterns of non-attendance are detected
- Ensure that, in cases where a student has truanted from their last lesson the student makes up missed work during a formal detention
- Ensure that appropriate work is set and marked for long-term absentees and those either on alternative curriculum programmes or on long-term exclusions
- Welcome back students who have returned from a long-term absence in a professional manner and adhere to the reintegration plan
- Ensure that all students within lessons are able to access the curriculum through a range of teaching and learning strategies in line with the school's Standard Operating Procedures

**Form Tutors will:**

- Follow the school procedures for tutor periods (Attendance SOP)
- Alert Heads of House to possible attendance concerns
- Promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality within their tutor group
- Monitor individual attendance and punctuality patterns on a weekly basis

**Heads of House will:**

- Foster a positive attitude to attendance within the house group through assemblies and the presentation of certificates
- Ensure that their tutor teams are fully aware of the school's attendance procedures and confident in their implementation
- Analyse attendance data weekly and monitor individual patterns, both in terms of punctuality and absence
- Contact parents and seek clarification when the tutor identifies a concern
- Where there are attendance concerns, parents are involved at the early stages to facilitate family support. Where necessary an Attendance Contract is set up by the Head of House.
- Liaise with subject teachers to set work for a period of absence/exclusion
- Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher for Progress Management on all cases where students attendance is less than 90%

- Organise and plan for the return of long-term absentees
- Be involved in the development and maintenance of the targeting process for full attendance
- Implement sanctions where there have been instances of truancy whether from individual lessons or for whole days

### **The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Student Progress will:**

- Take overall responsibility for developing Attendance Policy within the school
- Promote and encourage good attendance through the annual celebration of attendance awards ceremony
- Liaise with Heads of House on attendance issues relating to individuals or groups
- Liaise with the attendance officer responsible for maintaining the school's database for attendance (Attendance SOP)
- Oversee the collation of attendance data and the analysis of data to identify patterns of poor attendance amongst groups of students or year groups
- Report to the Leadership team and Governors on attendance matters

### **Absence Notes**

- **First Day Absence**

Parents are requested to inform school on the first day and any subsequent day of a child's absence preferably before 9:00am. This may be via a telephone call (01491 636812), email ([attendance@gillotts.org.uk](mailto:attendance@gillotts.org.uk)), via the Edulink Absence Reporting function on the app, or a note sent with another child. After 10.30am un-notified absences will be investigated via a text message or telephone call from the administrative staff. In the event of the school not being able to contact the parents, an email will be sent requesting details.

- **Third Day Absence**

A further email of concern will be sent, requesting parents contact the school immediately.

- **Ten Day Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team. **This is a legal requirement.** The school will include details of the action they have taken.

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the school within the context of the law can authorise absences. The provision of a note of explanation does not automatically authorise absences. The Local Authority can only take action on unauthorised absence when prosecuting parents/carers.

### **Appointments during the school day**

Class teachers should check the registration system for the time of the appointment. Pupils are expected to be in school for the remainder of the day. If they are not, the standard absence procedures should be followed. Genuine

medical appointments may be categorised as 'M' for a maximum of half a day unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please note, if your child has an appointment during the school day you must give us prior notice, otherwise it may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. We may also refuse to allow a student to sign out for an appointment if we have had no contact from a parent or guardian. We would expect all students to be out of school for the minimum necessary amount of time for an appointment.

## **Illness**

Students should report to student services if they feel unwell during the day where arrangements to contact parents/guardians will be made. Parents should inform the school as soon as possible on the first day that their child is unwell, telling the school the nature of the illness and expected duration. Sickness absences of longer than 5 days will need an accompanying appointment card, provided by the school and stamped by the surgery reception, or a screenshot of a confirmation text or email confirming a GP appointment. If the Head of House is concerned at the number of days illness a student has had a letter requesting permission to contact the student's GP will be sent home.

## **A welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

## **Leave/Holidays during term time**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013. Headteachers do have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in **exceptional circumstances**. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it is for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. There is **NO** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school-time to go on holiday. **ALL** parents will receive a Penalty Notice Warning Letter at the start of each academic year as a precursor to a consequent Penalty Notice. This letter will further outline the expectations for parents around school attendance, and the consequence of taking unauthorised term-time holiday.

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £80, or £160 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued. If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at a higher rate of £160.

## **Exceptional Circumstances include:**

- funerals or weddings of family members
- to visit a terminally ill relative
- forces staff returning from abroad

- parents returning from having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period
- compassionate leave

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Retrospective authorisation cannot be given if a parent takes their child on holiday and does not seek permission first. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice which could lead to a fine/ prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action below). Please note, exceptional Leave is likely to be refused in Year 11, and is likely to be refused if a child's attendance is below 95%.

## Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance and Engagement Service may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/ Carer can now be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as 10 or more sessions (5 school days) unauthorised absence over a 10 week period. These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
- A leave of absence (including holidays) has been taken that has not been approved due to exceptional circumstances during term time, of at least 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- They fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday.
- Their child is found out of school, without permission, on two Truancy Sweeps, within the same school year.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has been closed) equivalent to 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.
- Where a parent fails to ensure that an excluded pupil is not present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion without reasonable justification.

## Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by their Head of House and an attendance contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and Head of House to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance and Engagement Officer and could also be referred to them and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including: parenting orders,

education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment. The criteria for a full referral to be made is 10% absence during the school year.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

There is a requirement on the school Governing Body to report annually to parents the attendance and unauthorised absence statistics for the preceding school year.

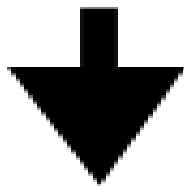
Gillotts will monitor targets set by the LA based upon previous attendance and unauthorised absence data. The school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether

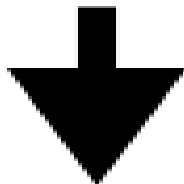
- Attendance has improved
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absence has improved
- Reintegration plans have been successful
- Students are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within the school

## Attendance flowchart

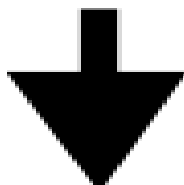
Yearly attendance hits <94% - low attendance letter sent home by school  
HoH/AHoH makes tutor aware and a meeting between student, tutor, and parent/guardian may take place (or a phone call home).



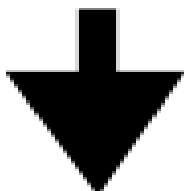
Attendance reaches 92%. Communication from HoH/AHoH to parent/guardian to highlight attendance is an issue and make aware that there will be an Attendance Contract (AC) if attendance drops further.



Attendance drops to <91% or there is 10% unauthorised absence. HoH/AHoH and Family Support Key Worker (if needed) meet with parent/guardian and an AC will be opened unless it is deemed inappropriate due to the student's circumstances; in this instance, other interventions will be explored e.g. initiating an Early Help Assessment (EHA) through the Locality & Community Support Service (LCSS), or seeking clarity from medical professionals for absence (GP, CAMHs etc). Penalty Notice Warning letter can also be sent at start of AC if sufficient concern re unauthorised absence, and can also be used later in the process.



Attendance monitored and reviewed in accordance with AC guidelines. AC should run for between 3 and 12 months, but there is no minimum or maximum duration. Target set in AC should be realistic to the individual student.



### **AC fails**

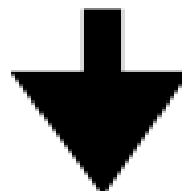
HoH/AHT proceed with Penalty Notice referral to the County Attendance team to start proceedings for fine

**OR**

HoH/AHT decide to proceed with referral to County Attendance team for non-attendance. Parents made aware

**OR**

If there is not sufficient evidence and a full referral does not seem appropriate, but there has been a large dip in attendance, a Penalty Notice warning letter will be sent. The student is monitored by OCC for a 15 day period and if no improvement is made to attendance the parent/guardian will be issued with a fine



### **AC passed**

HoH/Attendance administrator continue to monitor attendance closely over next 6 weeks.

If attendance subsequently falls below minimum expectation later in the year, proceed straight to referral/Penalty Notice

## **Attendance Awards**

We believe that the most positive way of improving attendance is continuously to highlight and promote it. The school does this at the end of each term in an attendance assembly, awarding certificates to those students who have attended every day of each term and for the whole school year with 100% certificates. We promote healthy competitiveness between houses and tutor groups in order to raise attendance awareness and engage students in its importance. Pupils are also recognised for excellent attendance within a school newsletter.

## **Related Policies**

Child protection  
Behaviour for Learning  
SEN  
Health and Safety  
Off-site Visits



## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

### Attendance Awards

At the end of each term, students will be rewarded as follows:

- 100% will receive 5 House Points
- 99% will receive 4 House Points
- 98% will receive 3 House Points
- 97% will receive 2 House Points
- 96% will receive 1 House Points

### Recording Attendance

- AM and PM attendance is recorded by subject teachers during period 1 and period 4 respectively, using Edulink software (or SIMS)
- The AM register closes at 9:00am and the PM register closes at 1:35pm.
- Where Edulink or SIMS are not accessible or equipment has failed, attendance will be recorded through a Student Absence Sheet, which will be sent to the Admin department for processing and recording attendance.
- New staff members are trained in the use of Edulink, SIMS and attendance procedures.

### Late Arrival:

<b>School start</b>		<b>Register</b>	
<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>08:45</b>	<b>Close</b>	<b>09:00</b>
<b>Lesson 2</b>	<b>09:45(5min changeover)</b>		
<b>Tutor time</b>	<b>10.45</b>		
<b>Lesson 3</b>	<b>11.30</b>		
<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>13.30</b>	<b>Register</b>	<b>13:35</b>
		<b>Close</b>	
<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>14.30(5min changeover)</b>		
<b>School end</b>	<b>15.30</b>		

- The subject teacher will record students who arrive late before the register is sent via Edulink as code 'L'
- If the register has been closed and sent to the network students must report to the general office to record their late arrival and reason.
- Late marks are recorded in Edulink or SIMS and checked – reports are produced and analysed – parents will be informed.

### Tutorial Periods:

- Tutors will check the absence report in their tutor group register each day.
- Tutors will send absence notes of explained absence daily via their register.
- Tutors will remind students of explanations of absence that have not been given and request written confirmation from parents.
- Tutors will receive and forward to admin daily any holiday/leave of absence applications for students.

- Tutors will check the weekly unexplained absence report in their register and if explanations are known to the tutor he/she can write the reason on the report otherwise the Tutor will remind the student that a letter of explanation is required.

### **Unexplained Absences:**

- Parents will receive a text message from the attendance team requesting a reason for absence. If they are unable to obtain a reason this way a follow up phone call will be made requesting a reason for the absence. For unexplained absences of longer than a day, school will coordinate a response within the pastoral team.
- Replies from parents are processed and given the appropriate code in Attendance by the Attendance Officer.
- After 5 days have passed and an explanation has not been given the unexplained absence code will be changed to code 'O' for unauthorised absence. The school will use the Family Support Key Workers to obtain a sighting of the child for safeguarding purposes, either through announced or unannounced visits to the home.

### **Attendance Report to DfE**

- School Performance Information and Absence Returns are produced on a termly basis and submitted to the L.A and DfE as scheduled throughout the year.

### **Official Registers**

- Produced on a termly basis for Ofsted Inspection

Adopted: February 2016

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2027