Gatton Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Gatton School is committed to ensuring attendance of all children is of an exemplary standard. Our Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make a path to Paradise easy for him." (Al-Bukhari) and that *"The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim."* (Al-Tirmidhi). This can only be possible efficiently if children attend school on time, in uniform, every day. We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and/or carers have a crucial role to play to ensure these good habits begin early in the children's lives.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Promoting attendance
The foundation for excellent attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of excellent attendance and how this will benefit them. This will be achieved through a variety of means including but not limited to;

- End of week newsletter highlighting attendance levels for each year and the weekly figures
- Verbal reminders to pupils and parents about the importance of regular attendance (e.g. assemblies, coffee mornings and at the school gate)
- Attendance policy documents are available on the website and hard copies available in the office.
- Annual reports stating historic attendance figures from Reception to Year 6.
- Monthly attendance and punctuality updates sent to all parents to help them keep track of their child's attendance progress from the start of the academic year to date.
- Attendance badges, medals and trophies given to pupils with 100% attendance. The school will encourage and promote good attendance through regular rewards for achieving 100% attendance in each term.

	Autumn				Spring				Summer		
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
Termly awards	Bronze star badge				Silver star badge				Gold star badge		
September to date awards	Medal										
	Trophy										

Members of staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Receptionist

- Supporting the Attendance Officer by logging onto the system any reported pupil absence
- Checking the registers for any unreported absence
- Carrying out the first day emails for any unexplained absence, recording on the daily attendance log details of the discussions held with parents/carers about pupil absence

Attendance Officer

- Day to day management of pupil attendance and punctuality, including liaison with the Receptionist
- Reporting attendance concerns to the senior leadership team
- Communication with parents and carers on attendance and punctuality matters
- Liaising with the Education Welfare Service on attendance matters
- Reporting pupil attendance summary information to the Senior Leadership Team.

Class Teacher

- Questioning absences
- Promoting a safe, inclusive and happy environment in school
- Noting patterns and raising with attendance officer and/or parents

Inclusion Leader(s)

- Monitoring the attendance of vulnerable pupils
- Liaising with the Attendance Officer and families with regards to attendance and punctuality matters

Headteacher

- Overseeing the work of the Attendance Officer and Inclusion Leader
- Setting targets for attendance and punctuality
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality trends in order to achieve the maximum possible levels
- Reporting to Wandsworth Local Authority and the Governing Body

Governors

The School reports attendance information to the Pupil Parent and Community Committee of the Governing Body on a termly basis. Type of information reported includes:

- Class and year group attendance figures
- Overall whole school attendance figures including authorised/unauthorised absence and persistent absence
- Anonymized case studies of pupils with high absence and what is being done to address this
- Progress towards the end annual attendance target
- How the school is performing compared to national figures for primary school attendance

The Full Governing Body receives a summary report from the Headteacher highlighting the key statistics on pupil attendance.

Transfer to other schools

When pupils transfer from Gatton to another setting, the pupil files held by the school are passed on to the receiving school. The file contains a range of information including the annual reports, attendance records and any issues that have involved the Education Welfare Service. Some selective secondary schools request information about attendance and punctuality as part of their pupil recruitment process.

Local Authority

The school works in partnership with Wandsworth LA to secure a high standard of pupil attendance and deal with issues that arise e.g. referral of families where there is a cause for concern, administration of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised attendance and support at Team Around the Child meetings where the level of school punctuality or attendance is a factor in the outcomes for a pupil. There is an Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school to deliver this service.

The school receives detailed reports about pupil attendance from the Wandsworth Research and Evaluation Service and uses this information alongside end of year assessment results to complete a self-evaluation of school effectiveness. Attendance and absence rates are included in the reports of pupil outcomes.

Department for Education

The school's attendance figures are available to the DfE. This information is analysed and made available to the school, the Local Authority and OFSTED inspectors.

Attendance Targets

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect National attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education (please see below).

Registers

The school uses a Management Information System (SIMS at the time of writing) for the completion of registers at the beginning of each session. In the event of this system not being available, paper registers are used. Class teachers (or cover teachers when the allocated teacher is absent) are responsible for completing registers and are sometimes assisted by teaching assistants in this task.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at:

- 8.15 am – children will be marked as present
- 8.25 am – children will be marked as late, but not absent.
- 8.45am – any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late after registration has closed. ***This means your child will be marked as having missed the whole morning session and this will be considered as an unauthorised absence***. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration time varies for each year group due to staggered lunch breaks

Year Group	Afternoon Registration Time
Reception	11.45 am
Year 1	12.00 pm
Year 2	12.00 pm
3A, 3B, 3C, 5A, 5B, 5C	12.30 pm
4A, 4B, 4C, 6A, 6B, 6C	1.00 pm

First Day Absence

- Parents/carers are expected to contact the school to report their child's absence, giving reasons for this. The message can be delivered by way of a phone call/email to the office by the parent/carer to report absence. This information is logged by the Receptionist.
- If no message is received and the pupil is not in by 10.00 a.m. the Receptionist will email the parent/carer. Details will be logged, and the register updated.

Second Day Absence

- If no message is received and the pupil is not in by 9.00 a.m. the Receptionist will email the parent/carer. Details will be logged and the register updated.
- The Receptionist will report to the Attendance officer.

Third Day Absence

If the child is still away and there has been no contact from the parent/carer the Attendance Officer will

- Send out a standard email asking the parent to contact the school as soon as possible to explain the absence.
- Inform the Safeguarding lead and Headteacher of the situation.

The Attendance Officer will liaise with the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Service as appropriate.

Continuing Absence

If there has still been no contact from the parent(s) after the email has been sent. The matter is raised with the Education Welfare Officer.

Ten Days Absence

The Local Authority will be notified when any pupil is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. This is done by the submission of a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Officer for the school. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes will be retained for a longer period.

Medical Evidence

Where a Pupils attendance is below 92%, medical evidence is required to support absences. Medical evidence can be a medical certificate, a note from their GP, a photocopy of a prescription or a copy of the label of any prescription medicine.

Frequent Absence

Excellent Attendance	98% - 100%
Good Attendance	95%- 97%
Satisfactory Attendance	93%- 94%
Unsatisfactory Attendance	Below 92%

Please note the above % are for guideline purposes and therefore the pattern or absence needs to be considered alongside the raw %.

Within the school it is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

DEALING WITH PUPIL ABSENCE

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be strongly discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorise absences in exceptional circumstances; the **Headteacher** will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents must apply in writing in advance, stating the circumstance for the request leave. If leave is granted, evidence such as flight tickets which state the booking date, departure date and return date must be provided.

Parents are expected to provide the school with reasons for all absence from school (on the first day of absence) in the form of an email or telephone call to the school office where it can be recorded on the pupil's record. The school will monitor all children's attendance on a day by day, week by week basis.

<u>Absence for Medical Reasons</u>
When a parent reports their child is absent for medical reasons, staff will ask for further information (nature of illness, expected length of absence). If the school has concerns that the illness may not be genuine or warrant the amount of absence accruing, the school may ask to substantiate the illness by asking to see additional evidence (e.g. appointment card, note from a health professional).

Frequent Absence

It is important that any emerging attendance concerns are identified early. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers.

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse (if the problem appears to be a medical one). In other cases, the school will discuss the problem with the Education Welfare Service.

Absence immediately before and after holiday periods

All absences two weeks prior to the end of a school term will be recorded as unauthorised. If your child fails to return to school at the start of a new term, their absences for those sessions will also be recorded as unauthorised. The headteacher will review each case individually and may request additional evidence to substantiate illnesses where the facts point to the contrary.

Persistence Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling at any time within the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is most likely to cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the fullest support and co-operation from parents/carers is required to minimise absence from school.

All pupils whose attendance level falls below 92% may be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Attendance Officer and a member of the school leadership team. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance.

School Attendance Panel (SAP)

Failure to provide evidence for pupil absence could result in parents/carers being required to attend a SAP which may include the following people:

- Health professionals (e.g. school nurse, GP) may be invited if relevant
- Education Welfare Officer

Fast Track

Pupils will be Fast Tracked to the local authority to consider legal escalation in cases whereby;

- Attendance is below 90% with the majority of absences unauthorised,
- Where a pupil has unsatisfactory attendance, and the school deem there is poor engagement from parent/carer
- Where a pupil has been referred to the local authority on 2 occasions for missing 10 consecutive days of school
- Pupil has been identified as being a "persistent absence" pupil in the previous academic year

Before initiation of the Fast Track process, schools should issue the Court Warning letter along with a cover letter listing what intervention has been or is taking place (parental contract, SAP meetings, referral to supporting agencies, breakfast club, mentor support) along with an attendance print out of the current and previous academic year.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This will 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 the other pupils.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
   This is for those pupils for whom no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. DFE guidelines state that the following types of activities would be classified as **unauthorised:**

   - Minding the house
   - Awaiting repair people
   - Shopping
   - A family celebration

2. Authorised Absence
   This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity
   This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.
   Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

   - Work experience placements
   - Field trips and educational visits
   - Sporting activities
   - Link courses or approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

4. Leave Requests for Pilgrimage:

Leave for Umrah may only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances. We strongly promote Umrah to be taken during school holidays and when

- Attached to an existing school holiday period
- A maximum number of 3 days
- The leave request form is completed and processed by the school in advance of booking.
- Dates of the trip are evidenced (e.g. copy of the airline tickets are shared)
- The child has a good attendance record during the current and past year

5. Leave requests for family-related matters
   - Close family relatives overseas - Overseas bereavements – leave requests will be considered up to 5 days, subject to evidence being provided
   - Overseas medical emergencies - leave requests will be considered up to 5 days, subject to evidence being provided
   - Family weddings – leave requests for this purpose will not be granted

6. Preparation for school entrance exams (e.g. 11+)
   The school occasionally receives leave requests or amended attendance from parents for their children to prepare for secondary school entrance tests. ***Such requests will not be authorised***. Preparation for these tests must be managed out of school hours (e.g. after school and on weekends).

Safeguarding Children Missing Education (CME)

In line with the safeguarding duties of the school, all unexplained pupil absences will be investigated. The school will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Established procedures will be followed, but each case needs to be treated on its own merits, taking into account all the facts of the case. Some children are at particular risk and may also need referral to social care.

Guidance for Staff

Registration

- Class teachers are responsible for attendance registers
- The class teachers will take registers at 8.15 am.
- Registers will close at 8.25 am.
- If a pupil arrives after the register closes but before 8:45am, he/she will be marked on the system as late (L) by the office staff.
- Pupils who arrive after 8:45am should report to the office and will be marked on the system as late (U).

Maintenance of Registers

- Registers are to be completed electronically.
- Each pupil's absence is to be monitored monthly, so that cumulative absence can be seen at a glance and followed up consistently by the attendance officer.
- Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates provided to explain absence are to be handed to the office. These are then to be passed to the attendance officer for filing.
- Rapid responses are essential if there is no contact from the parent.
- In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact is to be made with the parents and referred to attendance officer.

Repeated Absence

If a pattern of concern regarding attendance or punctuality is developing:

- The class teacher should raise this with the parents to find out why this is the case.
- If there is no significant improvement, the class teacher will liaise with the Attendance Officer who will contact the parents and invite them into school to discuss attendance.
- If there is still no improvement, the Senior Leadership Team (will contact parents and invite them to attend a meeting. The Headteacher will be made aware of this.
- If the problem continues, the Education Welfare Officer is informed and provided with copies of all previous attempts to resolve the issues.

Punctuality Procedure

Situation	Tooting site
Gates/Door open	8.00 a.m.
Start time	8.15 a.m.
Late arrival	8.25 a.m. – 8.45 a.m.
	• Pupil's name is marked down as late • Pupils are given a verbal reminder about the importance of punctual arrival for the start of the school day.
	• The lateness is monitored • If more than 5 times late in one half term the parents receive a Punctuality Reminder Letter emailed from the Attendance Officer
Late after registration has closed (considered an unauthorised absence)	8.45 a.m.
	• If more than 5 times late in one term, the Attendance Officer sends a Punctuality Reminder Email to parent/carer • If no improvement, parent / carer invited to a meeting with an Assistant Head Teacher to discuss concerns and agree an action plan
	• If the pattern of lateness persists, the Attendance Officer will discuss the case with the Education Welfare Officer to identify the next steps.

The Registration System

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence (performance)	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence (part-time timetable)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Suspended or Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview or examination	Approved Education Activity
K	Attending alternative provision (arranged by LA)	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointment	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
Q	Unable to attend – Lack of access arrangement	
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Unable to attend – Normal transport not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Unable to attend – Widespread travel disruption	
Y3	Unable to attend – Unavoidable partial closure	
Y4	Unable to attend – Unavoidable full closure	
Y5	Unable to attend – Criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend – Public health guidance / law	
Y7	Unable to attend – unaviodable other than Y1-Y6	
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school will make use of the attendance data available (e.g. Inspection Dashboard, Raise online and that published by Wandsworth Local Authority when setting its target. Targets will relate to national averages.

The school will have a named governor for attendance. This will usually be the governor who is the designated governor for safeguarding and inclusion.