



GOBOWEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND GUIDANCE

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Gobowen Primary School.

At Gobowen Primary School, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Gobowen Primary School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”*** (DfE 1999).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils learning experience is unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/CARERS

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

PUNCTUALITY

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. Both KS1 and KS2 doors open at 8:45am until 8:55am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.
- To ensure children who are late after 8:55am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:30am will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

ABSENCES

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office or by emailing. (Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.)
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for **outside school hours**. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

ILLNESS/MEDICAL ABSENCES

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

ABSENCE FOR OTHER REASONS

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Head. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

ABSENCE FOR HOLIDAYS

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education. If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Heads' authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**

ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)

- To investigate absence which falls below 93% and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness that exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence that exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Parents of children, who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority.

PERSISTENT LATECOMERS

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:55am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:30am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.

WHAT IS GOOD ATTENDANCE?

SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATION	Above 99%
ABOVE AVERAGE EXPECTATION	97% - 99%
AVERAGE EXPECTATION	95% – 97%
BELOW EXPECTATION	93% – 95%
SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATION	Below 93%

If a child's attendance is below 93% then the EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER will contact parents/carers.

WHY IS GOOD ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Attendance	Equals days absent	Approximate weeks absent	Number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

EXAMPLES OF UNAUTHORISED ATTENDANCE

Sickness of a parent or other family member
Inadequate clothing for school
Child being used as a carer
Problems with transport
Non-urgent medical treatment – eg. dental check-up, doctors' appointments for minor ailments (these should be made after school finishes)
School refusal or truancy
A birthday treat or shopping trip
Family holiday

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Last reviewed: June 2024