



GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Name	Attendance
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
Owner	Vice Principal / Pastoral
Statutory	No
Authorisation	Principal to ratify, S&C Trustees to note

Date Ratified	Review Date
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Introduction

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Attending school on a regular basis and being punctual is crucial for success. The best place for your child/children to be is in the Academy learning; any absence results in lost learning time.

Missing days of learning in succession (over a period of time) makes catching up more of a challenge for the student, and often they can find themselves falling behind.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this amount days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent
90%	19 days	4 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and is essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school. Guilsborough Academy has set an expectation of at least 96% for students to achieve.

Guilsborough Academy will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carers.

We have a duty in law to refer any continual absence of 10 days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS). The school may also look at possible safeguarding concerns for prolonged periods of absence.

We are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason including illnesses or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which Guilsborough Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:



- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Holidays/Absences in Term Time

From September 2016 the criteria for issuing Penalty notices for unauthorised term time absence changed, so it will now be 10 sessions (equivalent to **5 school days** in a 6 week period). This means that if you book an unauthorised holiday for 5 or more days during term time the Local Authority is asking schools to refer this to the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) for consideration of further action. This may result in the team issuing you with a fixed penalty notice. The initial Fixed Penalty Notice of £60.00 is issued to each parent for each child (In a two-parent family with two children this amounts to £240.00).

Penalty notices are also issued for:

Penalty notices for non-school attendance - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences in a 6 week period.

Penalty notices for term time absence - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.

Parental requests for time off in term time

Parents/carers may write to the Principal and request time off for their child(ren) from school which may be granted by the Principal. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and this will not include holidays in term time.

Parents/carers should always try to arrange medical/dental appointments out of school hours.

Expectations:

We expect that our **pupils** will:

- Regularly attend Guilsborough Academy according to the published session times – ensuring that they arrive at the Academy in time to be registered at the beginning of the morning session at 8:45 am
- if they arrive late to the Academy but before the end of the registration period, go to their form room where their Form Tutor will record them as late. If they arrive after the end of the form period/assembly session, they should go to their first lesson where they will be registered by their class teacher using Go4Schools
- if absent for a valid reason, parent(s)/carer(s) hold responsibility to inform the Academy on the first day of absence and to provide a written note or send an email explaining the absence upon their child's return to the Academy. If absent, students should make every effort to access and complete any work they have missed.
- For Post 16 students, attendance is required from 8.45am until 3.15, and all students are expected to fully engage with tutor time, timetabled lessons, supervised study, and independent study periods. Appointments (including driving lessons) should be scheduled for outside of these hours.
- From Term 2 onwards of Year 13, students may be authorised to study at home where their timetable allows. This will be at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form. Students will only be eligible for home study if they have excellent attendance and punctuality, are making good progress in line with their target grades and are complying to all Sixth Form Policies (including dress code and wearing lanyards).



- If Sixth Form students are absent for a valid reason, confirmation of this from Parents/Carers is still required.

We expect that our **parents/carers** will:

- uphold the Home-School Agreement to ensure regular attendance;
- ensure their child attends the Academy according to the published dates and session times, and that they are equipped for all lessons;
- If your child is unable to attend the Academy, you must contact the Academy through the student absence line at the earliest opportunity to explain the reason why. When your child returns to the academy, provide a written explanation for the period of absence. If proof is not shown your child will be given an unauthorised absent mark on their attendance record;
- avoid any absence from school for routine medical appointments during term time. Students having medical or dental appointments must bring an appointment card or note from their parents/carers, which should be authorised by the Form Tutor. Where possible, every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside of our Academy hours, especially for ongoing treatment;
- not arrange holidays or leave of absence in term time. If there is a need for a student to take time off during term time then the student's parents/carers should write to the Principal to Request the leave of absence. The Academy will only grant leave during term time in exceptional circumstances, in line with statutory regulations.

Note: Parents/carers who remove their child during term time without authorisation from the Principal risk incurring a financial penalty.

The **Academy** will:

- send out an email/text message if your child is absent and we have not heard from you, asking that you please contact the academy to explain the absence.
- Phone home on the first day of absence for vulnerable children and looked after children. We ensure that any absence of two days without satisfactory explanation is referred to the SASS and/or Social Worker.
- accurately record the attendance and any absence of a student; through a system of registering students in lessons and regular spot checks, identify any post registration truancy - informing parents/carers immediately should that occur;
- in the case of known long term absence (with a medical note) where appropriate, provide work for the student at home; take action to achieve the successful reintegration of the student on their return. The school may seek permission from the parent to seek advice from a medical professional.

When problems of attendance arise:

A staged approach is taken which includes letters and meetings with Academy Staff. This includes Pastoral, Head of Year, Senior Leadership Team and Trustees.

Following fixed reviews, if attendance does not improve, or continue to fall further:

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence and appointment cards.
- The academy will contact SASS for further support
- Referral to the SASS for prosecution may be necessary if attendance falls below 90% and is not improving.
- All pupils with a good attendance are rewarded in line with the Academy Rewards Policy.
- Attendance above 96% is expected by all our pupils



Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. We recognise there are many reasons as to why a student may struggle to attend school. Open and regular communication is key to us working together to identify issues and put a plan in place to resolve them.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to a member of the School Attendance Support Service from Northamptonshire County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed.

SASS are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available by contacting Northamptonshire County Council.

- Student and also parent contracts are considered in developing an improved attendance percentage for students.

Home Visits

Home visits take place for a number of reasons. They are usually conducted when we have been unable to contact a parent or carer for 3 consecutive days. The purpose of the visit is to conduct a welfare check and to work with families to remove barriers to non-attendance.

Children Missing in Education

If we have been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a student for 10 consecutive days, they will be reported as a Child Missing in Education (CME). Contact with other agencies such as SASS and the Police may have been contacted or involved prior to this.

References

Further information regarding attendance is published on the Academy website.

This policy has been written with reference to the following documents:

DfE - [working together to improve school attendance](#)

DfE - statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

DfE - [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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 2013](#)



Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Vice Principal

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the Family Support Worker and external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker is responsible for:

- Maintain regular communication with specific parents/carers and provide personalised support for families through issues as they arise regarding non-attendance to school
- Put interventions in place to encourage parents/carers' involvement in supporting pupils' development and progress
- Keep up to date on the latest services available in the local area so you can promote and signpost parents/carers to these via a range of communication channels (e.g. social media, newsletters, in meetings, etc)
- Carry out home visits, where required
- Implement and monitor progress of action plans, working with parents/carers to make adjustments to support as necessary
- Support parents/carers through the application process for accessing local services and help them attend relevant meetings
- To run supportive parenting groups for vulnerable families or targeted groups

Other staff responsible for attendance are:

Heads of Year

Assistant Heads of Year



Tutors
Student Reception

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.