Goat Lees Primary School

Attendance Policy

Revision Prepared	July 2026
Date Agreed	9/7/2026
Signed by Headteacher	T Adams
Signed by Chair of Governing Board	N Bellman
Date Policy to be Reviewed	2 Years

Statement of Intent

Goat Lees Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and encourage children to have good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Goat Lees Primary School.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor's role within the monitoring of pupil attendance will be to review the strategies/interventions the school currently uses to improve attendance

The Headteacher

- The headteacher is responsible for:
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring to the Attendance service for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

- 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
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating support plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher who can be contacted via 01233 630201 and/or email: office@goatlees.kent.sch.uk

The 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 senior leaders and the headteacher
- Working with school liaison officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is the school Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and can be contacted via 01233 630201 and/or email: office@goatlees.kent.sch.uk / flo@goatlees.kent.sch.uk

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for

- Ensuring the register is taken on time (twice a day)
- Promoting good attendance across the school
- Notifying the FLO of children whose attendance is causing concern
- Sharing attendance concerns during parent consultation meetings

School Admin Staff

School admin staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS system (Arbor)
- Check emails and phone messages from parents about absences
- Recording absences/reasons for absences on the school systems
- Record appropriate attendance code in the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Contacting families if a child has not arrived at school and no reason has been given for absence (first day calling)
- Where there has been no communication, they may assist the FLO in contacting parents via the most appropriate method, depending on circumstances and this may include home visits.
- Requesting evidence of appointments

Parents/Carers

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and

they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning.

Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Parents/Carers are expected to

- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known.
- Regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Parents should consult the NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time, arriving by 8.50am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parents/carer, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

Whole School

The role of all school staff at Goat Lees Primary School is the promotion of good attendance, all staff should:

- Make it clear to all pupils that punctuality and good school attendance is important
- Follow up on absentees and reasons for absence/lateness discreetly and with respect
- Give a sympathetic and supportive 'welcome back' to pupils returning from a period of absence and facilitate catch up work when appropriate
- Be ready to talk to pupils (or their parents/carers) about difficulties they are having in school and any problems they may have with attendance
- Offer advice as appropriate

Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- Attendance (strive for 100% no less than 95% however we will take into account exceptional circumstances) - monitoring - FLO to contact parents/carers if appropriate. School intervention letters/meeting with parents may be required, depending on circumstances

- Where the level of absence has not been improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school may make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer (SLO) for advice. This may also be discussed at Attendance Meetings with the SLO
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may recommend an Early Help Notification.

The School Day

Gate Opening Time	Morning Registration	Afternoon Registration	School Day End
8.40am	8.50am	1.15pm	3.20pm

Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Punctuality and Lateness

At Goat Lees Primary School, the register is taken at 8.50am and 1.15pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.30am and 1.30pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. We endeavor to confirm the reason for absences and this may take the form of text message, email or telephone call. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence and every subsequent day by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school, either by tel: 01233 630201 or email: office@goatlees.kent.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day and every subsequent day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a CME referral or contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This may include home visits.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly report.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised. Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term-time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances".

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances:

- Persistent nonspecific illness eg.poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons and medical evidence
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Pupils with Long Term Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs

Goat Lees Primary School will work together with parents of pupils with long term medical conditions or special educational needs. Schools must be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put in additional support where necessary to help them access full time education. This will be done in partnership with parents.

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Holidays

Holidays will not be authorised. For unauthorised family holidays (Code G) Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised April 2017.

A Penalty Notice will be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling - these do not need to be consecutive.

Exceptional Circumstances

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. Implying that an event could not be reasonably scheduled at another time.

Each case will be judged on its own merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to Kent County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Examples of Exceptional circumstances (provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive):

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Exceptional circumstances do not include:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Ability of only getting certain dates off work

Legal Sanctions

If leave of absence is denied but the child does not attend school at the requested time it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, the case may be referred to the SLO or a penalty notice may be requested. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority. 10 unauthorised absences in a period can be referred to the SLO.

- ½ day = 1 unauthorised absence
- 1 day = 2 unauthorised absences

- thereafter 1 week = 10 unauthorised absences

From February 2005 KCC (LEA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions in a seasonal term (2 current terms). The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for a fixed penalty notice.

- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time
- Persistent lateness after the close of registration
- Delayed return from an approved leave of absence
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

- Attendance Goat- awarded in Monday assembly by the Headteacher.
- Attendance certificate (3x year) celebrating good attendance including improved attendance.
- Class with highest attendance is highlighted on the e-bulletin which is shared with parents
- Attendance is discussed at parent consultation meetings
- High expectations are set for attendance for new intake pupils via parental communication during transition meetings.

The School Liaison Officer (SLO) works closely with our Headteacher and senior leaders.

- They check how many children have attended school and how many children have been absent or late
- They may contact parents/carers if a child is often late or absent
- They can visit students and parents/carers in their homes
- They can take parents/carers to court where each parent/carer may be fined. A parent/carer may go to prison if he/she lets a child miss school often
- They hold the school to account for the attendance of its pupil

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting

		activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C2	Part-time timetable	Part-time timetable notified on the Front Door
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's

		absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day