

Attendance Policy

George Stephenson High School



Governance	Governing Body
Policy Officer	Deputy Headteacher
Adopted Date	
Review Date	
Next Review Date	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities:

Role	Responsibility
The Governing Body (Chair: Andrew Elliott)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos • Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties • Regularly review and challenging attendance data • Monitor attendance figures for the whole school • Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance • Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
The Headteacher (Mr Douthwaite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement this policy at the school • Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils • Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies • Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
Whole School Attendance Lead. Pastoral Deputy Headteacher (Mrs. Dunn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement • Drive whole school attendance strategy and action plan. • Lead CPL on attendance and provide regular staff updates. • Report to governors as per schedule to share attendance data, delivery of strategy and impact. • Deliver attendance sessions for all new staff and ITT students as part of induction. • Oversee fortnightly attendance meetings with the attendance team, identify key areas of focus and evaluate impact of interventions. • Ensure attendance is a focus on agenda for pastoral meetings. • Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Rewards and Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement reward strategy to recognize excellent and improved attendance.

Development (Mrs. Robson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students in developing their resilience, pride in their achievements and contribution to school life as part of the personal development programme.
Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Primary to Secondary Transition (Mr. Lunn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with feeder schools to identify those with attendance issues, or those where attendance may be affected by the move, identifying sibling links where we know attendance has been a concern. • Ensure that on admission, parents are fully informed of the schools' expectations in relation to attendance. • Work in partnership with the feeder schools to ensure messages to parents regarding attendance are consistent.
Education Welfare Officer (Claire Leman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out home visits to PA (Persistent Absence) students and their families • Build strong partnerships with families to support those with poor attendance • Meet with students and their families to discuss barriers to attendance and devise strategies to overcome these • Liaise closely with attendance administrator to share information regarding vulnerable students. • Meet weekly with attendance lead to discuss attendance issues and referrals to attendance and placement. • Work with Guidance managers and Attendance Lead to identify additional support from within school as well as external agencies to help improve attendance • Lead/contribute to an EHA (Early Help Assessment) where poor attendance is the primary concern. • Work with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence. • Consult with DHT, to advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
Attendance Administrator (Marie Parker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all absence messages left by parents/carers. • Review students of concern and alert DHT and GM where there has been no contact made from home. • Each morning, contact parents/carers where school has not received a reason for absence. • Call home when 3 N codes reached and report to EWO. • Where no contact has been made for 2 days notify DHT and relevant GM and the EWO. • Update SIMS when a student signs out for an appointment, illness, or suspension and administer student passes from site. • Check all form class registers are complete. • Print and update assembly registers and enter into SIMS once complete. • Check and mark lates in SIMS and Class Charts for students arriving after registration. • Update attendance marks for out of school visits and trips. • Ensure all PM registers are taken (period 5) • Update attendance marks for dual registered students. • Support EWO in student and parental meetings. • Send letters home regarding unexplained absences, lates and holidays. • Update and maintain accuracy of Fire Box registers • Share 6th Form weekly attendance with Longbenton High School.
Attendance Data Manager (Emma Gray)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce weekly, half termly, termly and full year data to share with attendance lead, GMs, LT, and tutors including whole school,

	<p>year groups, key groups and intervention groups including PP and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Attendance Lead, Attendance Administrator and EWO in using data to identify target groups for attendance interventions and benchmark against national and local data. • Work with Attendance Lead to ensure attendance data is complete for census. • Send weekly migration reports Attendance Lead and to LA every half term • Process CTFs for incoming and outgoing students
SEND team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support excellent school attendance with students with SEND
Guidance managers and student support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To lead team of form tutors in monitoring and implementation of strategies to improve attendance • To re-enforce the importance of good attendance at all parental meetings • To highlight attendance issues in assemblies throughout the year and celebrate successes • Take steps to support, identify and support pupils who transfer mid-year, when there is an attendance issue.
Head of Sixth Form (Mrs Ronan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with staff at LHS and the attendance administrator to track attendance of post 16 students. • Liaise with Sixth Form ASC to plan, deliver and evaluate interventions to improve attendance and punctuality in the sixth form.
ASCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for monitoring attendance and delivering intervention to ASC intervention group of %??
Subject Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accurately complete registers within the first 10 minutes of the lesson • To create a positive atmosphere in their lessons and encourage students to attend well and achieve • Offer a warm welcome and support for those returning to the classroom after an absence
Form Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To accurately complete registers at the start of registration • To create a positive atmosphere in registration time and tutorials • Keep their tutor noticeboard up to date with attendance notices, posters, and other information to promote good attendance. • To contact parents in the first instance when there are concerns about a student's punctuality and/or attendance • To share information with students as part of the registration programme on their attendance figures and targets.
Parents and Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure their child attends every day, on time • Notify the school to report their child's absence before 8.30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return • Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child • Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend school every day on time • Attend every timetabled session on time

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make every effort to stay in school if they are feeling a little unwell • Make every effort to catch up on missed work as a result of absence from school.
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3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.25** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30 and will be kept open until 9.00. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15 and will be kept open until 1.45.

3.2 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 as soon as practically possible by calling the school, giving the reason for the absence and the expected date of return to school.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must speak to their Guidance Manager first. If the decision is made that they are too ill to remain in school, then the office will call home. Students must not use their own mobile phone to call or text parents.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should notify the school, of a planned absence due to medical appointment. The student should still attend school for the other part of that day. An appointment card or letter will be requested as 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Students who are late for school will receive a break time detention on the same day. Repeated lateness to school will result in monitoring reports and further sanctions such as detentions and/or loss of social time. Failure to attend these detentions will lead to further sanctions including internal exclusion.

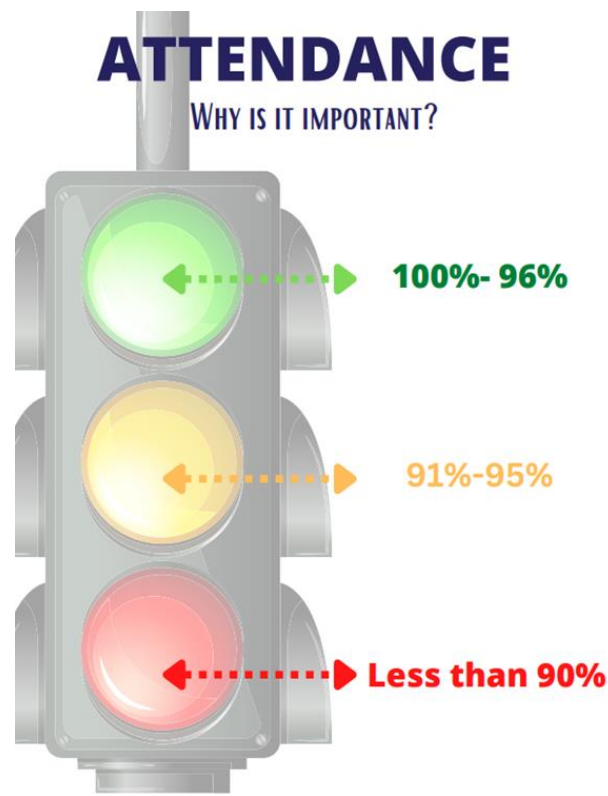
3.5 Following up unexplained absence

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 of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may ask the education welfare officer to visit the home address and identify whether the absence is approved or not. Where we have concerns about a child's safety and are unable to reach parents, we will notify Children's Services and/or the Police.
- 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. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be provided in registration time activities and tutorials as well as the progress reports sent home throughout the year. Where a student's absence falls below 92% we will send a letter home highlighting our concern and offering further support to improve attendance.



4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Term time absence forms can be requested by emailing absence@gshs.org.uk.

Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. It is for the Headteacher to decide what he/she views as 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. If the leave is granted, the head teacher is able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent. Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application.

If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

Use of Penalty Notices

School may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice in the following circumstances:

- where a parent/carer has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time.
- where a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences sessions during the monitoring period set up by North Tyneside Council.

Penalty Notice Warnings may be issued for the following reasons:

- In cases where a student is persistently late for school before and after the register has closed and a parent has failed our 4 week monitoring agreement.
- In cases where a student's parents/carers fail to work with the school and the Attendance and Placement Service to improve attendance.

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to North Tyneside Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Use of the Fast Track System

The Fast Track Process will be used when a student's percentage attendance is exceptionally low. Attendance will be monitored by the school for four weeks; parents/carers will be notified of this by letter. At the end of this period if there is no improvement the case will be referred to the Attendance and Placement Service who will consider whether the case should be referred for a court hearing. The result of this can be a substantial fine or in some cases, imprisonment.

Parents are asked to respect the new regulations under which the school must work and if there is a need to take a child out of school during term-time, an application or request must be made in advance and make clear how the circumstances are exceptional.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

4.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Students are rewarded for good attendance in assemblies and in termly attendance recognition events. This includes recognizing where improvements have been made as well as those with 100% attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern. We report attendance to parents via our SIMS Parent App, in school reports and half termly communication by either parent mail or letter. The Deputy Headteacher and school Education Welfare Officer will have weekly meetings to monitor students' attendance using the data collected to see if attendance has, stayed the same, improved or deteriorated This student data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention. Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment. We will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems. School recognise that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special

educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children. The school will implement strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents/carers and pupils
- Attendance panels/ School Attendance Contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Student Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students. Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions will be considered

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, Guidance Managers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Invite parents to a meeting with the school's Educational Welfare Officer and Guidance Manager in order to set targets for attendance and to explore opportunities to support the student and their families. Discussions with the Education Welfare Officer may take place for any student at any time. A declining

pattern or level of attendance may result in a letter from school informing parents/carers all further absences will not be authorised without medical confirmation – the school is responsible for authorising absence, not the parents/carers

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
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

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
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
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
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