



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date agreed by Governors	Summer 2023
<b>Next Review</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>

<b>Linked Documents</b>
Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
DfE Guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' May 2022 (applies from Sept 2022)
Home-School Agreement
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Positive Behaviour Policy



**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles which inform this policy are:**

- Article 3: The best interest of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- Article 4: Every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children’s rights.
- Article 6: Parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their children as they grow up.
- Article 12: Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.
- Article 14: Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion.
- Article 16: Every child has the right to privacy.
- Article 18: Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child.
- Article 28: Every child has the right to education. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights.
- Article 29: Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and their environment.

**School’s Purpose:** To prepare pupils for lifelong success

**School’s Vision:** At Godwin Junior School we:

- Value everyone
- Instil a love of learning
- Seek and encourage talent
- Inspire resilient learners
- Open minds to develop responsible global citizens
- Nurture confident, articulate individuals

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Godwin Junior School has reviewed and updated our Attendance Policy in line with the requirements of the school attendance guidance published in May 2022 (applies from Sept 2022) from the Department for Education (DfE).

Central to the ethos and vision of our school is the belief that every child receives an excellent education to prepare our children for lifelong success. Parents/carers have a duty to ensure children are receiving full-time education, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. If a child is not in school, they are at significant risk of underachieving, becoming socially isolated, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. As a school we have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across our school community. Good attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and is therefore everyone's responsibility.

We fully endorse current research that demonstrates a strong correlation between good attendance and high achievement, both in terms of progress and attainment.

## **2. AIMS**

- To promote and improve pupil attendance
- To fulfil the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability
- To minimise absence, including persistent absence and term time holidays
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
- To raise educational achievement and social development of all pupils
- To work closely with families who may need support to ensure maximum attendance for their children
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data and addressing patterns of absence
- To promote and reward regular school attendance
- To promote excellent punctuality as we believe that a prompt, organised start to the school day helps children with their learning
- To achieve the school's attendance, persistent absence and punctuality targets as set out on our website
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibility in relation to attendance

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 Parents and Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends every day unless they are unwell or have another authorised absence
- Ensure their child arrives on time every day

- Contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence stating the child's name, class and reason for absence. This should be done on the morning of the first absence, before school starts, and every day thereafter.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school dressed appropriately and to bring their reading book and reading record journal on the allocated days.
- Avoid arranging medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible
- Not take term-time holidays
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning
- Ensure the school is given two emergency contact numbers which are kept up-to-date
- Inform the school whom the child normally resides with

The school email is [info@godwin.newham.sch.uk](mailto:info@godwin.newham.sch.uk) and the telephone number is 020 8534 7601

### **3.2 School Administration Staff**

The school administration staff are responsible for:

- Maintaining the registers, taken twice a day. All registers are electronically recorded
- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence and recording it on the electronic registers
- Ensuring all the attendance codes used are correct in line with the latest Department of Education School Attendance document (see appendix 1)
- Contacting all families who fail to notify the school on their child's absence on the first day of absence. If a family does not answer the call, admin staff will leave a message and contact all of the emergency contact numbers. They will then repeatedly keep trying to call the family throughout the day – keeping a log of the date and times. If this is unsuccessful then admin staff will email the family to ascertain the reason why the child is absent.
- Contacting all families who fail to notify the school of their child's absence every day thereafter, including the emergency contact numbers
- Notifying the Deputy Head Teacher immediately (as this is a safeguarding issue) where the school has been unable to contact the family.
- Sending out a 'Reason for Absence' letter out to the family upon the child's return to school to ascertain the reason for absence.
- Keeping a record of each pupil who arrives late, seeking an explanation from the parent/carer, noting the reason and updating the electronic register.
- Entering the 'L' code if a child is late before the register is closed and a 'U' code if the child has arrived after the register is closed (9:25am)
- Notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head Teacher of absences of vulnerable pupils on a daily basis
- Asking for approval from the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher if a parent/carer wishes to remove their child from school during the course of the school day
- Providing SLT with weekly attendance data for celebration of whole school attendance in whole school assembly and the newsletter

### **3.3 The Class/PPA Cover Teacher**

The Class/PPA Cover Teacher is responsible for:

- Taking the electronic register twice a day, once at the beginning of the school day and once after lunchtime
- Completing the attendance register accurately and punctually: 8:55am for all year groups
- Looking carefully at attendance data to spot patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals
- Strengthening relationships with the children in their class, build awareness on how absences affect their learning and to encourage students to come to school every day.
- Making a personal connection with parents/carers of pupils who have regular absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.
- Reporting immediately to the office any child present in the morning, yet absent for the afternoon register
- Recording pupils' attendance electronically, using the correct codes on the SIMS data management software
- Liaising with the Deputy Head Teacher when there are concerns regarding the attendance of pupils
- Informing the office and the Inclusion Leader if a child who has targeted adult support does not arrive for school
- Including attendance data in the annual report to parents/carers
- Discussing the impact of low attendance on learning and on the social aspect at termly Parent/Carer Conferences
- Recording all absences each morning and afternoon on a laminated class list which is positioned by the class door used to exit in the event of a fire alarm being sounded

### **3.4 The School Attendance Officer**

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across the whole school and at an individual pupil level
- Monitoring attendance data for significant groups of children
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Deputy Head Teacher
- Sending out proforma warning letters regarding attendance/punctuality concerns under the direction of the Deputy Head Teacher
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues with the Deputy Head Teacher
- Completing the Child Missing in Education (CME) checklist form if and when the need arises
- Advising when Fixed Penalty Notices (PCN) should be processed
- Producing all the documents needed to process Child Missing in Education and Penalty Charge Notice applications

- Keeping a record of children who have been sent home during the school day (for sickness or medical appointments), so that in the event of a fire drill or emergency, the school is aware of precisely how many children are on the premises
- Asking for approval from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if a children needs to be sent home for sickness or injury

### **3.5 The Deputy Head Teacher**

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Meeting with the Attendance Officer weekly to discuss attendance and punctuality data and to look for any trends
- Ensuring that the school is on track to meet its targets
- Monitoring significant groups eg PP against Non-PP, SEND against Non-SEND etc and putting strategies in place to tackle the issue of persistent absentees.
- Reporting attendance and punctuality data to the Senior Leadership Team weekly
- Conducting formal meeting with parents/carers where there is a cause for concern regarding attendance and/or punctuality
- Ensuring that individual cases are monitored and, if necessary, a plan of action is agreed
- Ensuring that strategies to optimise attendance are explored
- Making home visits, when appropriate, with the Early Help Lead
- Processing a Child Missing in Education application if a child has not attended school for 10 consecutive days and the school has been unable to contact the family.
- Completing an online E-Penalty Charge Notice application if and when the need arises

### **3.6 The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Informing families at school induction meetings of the importance of punctuality and attendance
- Granting leave under exceptional circumstances as outlined in this Policy
- Ensuring that the school procedures follow local authority/government guidance and policies
- Ensuring office staff are available to take telephone messages from 8:30am
- Ensuring that all personnel are trained on safeguarding and other relevant training to comply with the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Implementing this policy at Godwin Junior School
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Authorising London Borough of Newham to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued, where necessary

### **3.7 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.

- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this Policy.
- Helping the school to focus upon the need for a clear policy on attendance and ensure that trends and patterns are closely monitored
- Supporting the initiatives which are taken by the school to promote good attendance

#### 4. PROCEDURES

Our procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality are as follows;

- At the beginning of each session a register is completed by the class teacher. Guidance for staff on the accurate completion of registers has been provided in the Code of Conduct
- Registers are checked daily by the admin staff for accuracy
- Any amendments made to the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for a period of three years
- All children are expected to arrive for registration at 8:55am. Children can arrive 10 minutes before the registration time to listen to their teacher read to the whole class.
- Registration will be kept open for 30 minutes (the Government advises that schools can keep the register open for up to thirty minutes), after the register has been taken. If children are late they should report to the office and provide a reason for their lateness
- Late arrivals are added to the register with the reason recorded
- In line with Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence due to illness is authorised

Parents/carers are spoken to about their child's attendance regularly:

- through informal discussions
- at termly parent/carer conferences if attendance or punctuality issues are impacting on learning
- at formal meetings where there is a cause for concern and always when attendance or punctuality falls below LA or school trigger points
- annual reports to parents/carers include a record of their child's attendance

On occasion, parents/carers may ask for permission to take their child out of school. This absence is acceptable and authorised if

- a medical/dental appointment card is shown
- a serious family crisis arises
- a child's health or safety is at risk
- it is for an interview for a place at another school
- it is transition day/time for a new school
- the child is participating in an approved public performance or sporting event which is not deemed detrimental to their education

## **5. ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE CODES**

We use the national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System (see appendix 1)

## **6. PUPIL ABSENCE**

### **6.1 Stages to follow up persistent absence**

At Godwin Junior School the attendance of pupils is recorded electronically using the SIMS data management software. Reasons for pupil absence have a specific code and this assists the school to monitor persistent absentees. In our school we expect pupils to achieve 96% and above attendance and have fewer than 10 lates across the academic year.

#### Stage 1

If attendance or punctuality falls below an acceptable level; a letter will be sent to the parent/carer advising them of their child's unacceptable level of attendance or punctuality and ask them to ensure it improves while offering support and advice if appropriate. The attendance and/or punctuality are monitored for a further three weeks.

#### Stage 2

If attendance or punctuality fails to improve after three weeks of monitoring, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting with the Deputy Head Teacher to discuss the issue and targets will be set. Home visits will be carried out for pupils who are persistently absent or late.

#### Stage 3

If the meeting with the Deputy Head Teacher fails to bring about an improvement, an in-school Attendance Panel comprising of the School Attendance Officer, Deputy Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where possible, a governor, will meet parents/carers to inform them of the need for their child to attend regularly and punctually. At this stage, an Action Plan will be agreed with parents/carers. Such a Plan may include allocation of additional resources or external support. If the problem appears to be a medical one, a referral will be made to the school nurse. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside interventions to support the family and child, a referral may be made through Newham's Triage service for external agency support.

#### Stage 4

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fail to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures put in, the final step will be to involve the Newham Attendance Management Team and possibly Social Care.



## **6.2 Persistent Absence**

Children whose attendance is at 90% and below are classified as 'persistent absentees'. If a child is regularly absent due to illness the school will request that a parent/carer provides medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences. The school has the authority to unauthorise absences for persistent absentees if the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence.

## **6.3 Penalty Notices**

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

*Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007;*

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parents of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to their attention that the Penalty Notice had been issued in error.

*Section 444(1) Education Act 1996;*

'If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence'.

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order. Furthermore:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child
- 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.
- these prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in parents/carers having a criminal record.

## **6.4 Long-Term Sickness Absence**

Occasionally some children have to be away from school for a long period of time due to illness or for medical treatment. We will ensure that if they are well enough they can continue their education by providing school work so that the pupil can maintain similar curriculum coverage as their classmates. For some children the school offers a phased return to school. The school continues to work with these families to ensure a smooth transition back into school after a period of absence.

## **6.5 Dental and Medical Appointments**

Wherever possible, parents/carers should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or after the school day. Most medical appointments do not necessitate a full day absence

and it is the parent/carer's responsibility to bring their child back to school once the appointment is over.

### **6.6 Children Missing Education (CME)**

"Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register" (Department for Education).

Procedures for trying to trace children who cease to attend without prior notification are in place. If after ten days of continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, all checks will be completed as per CME pre-referral procedures, including a home visit. The child's details will be sent to the Local Authority for it to perform checks that are not available to school. The Local Authority will advise the school when to remove the child from the school roll. (Appendix 2)

### **6.7 Non Starters**

Pupils who are allocated a place at Godwin Junior School but fail to start are also treated as Children Missing Education. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to Newham Attendance Management Services and the CME team in order for further checks to take place.

### **6.8 Pupils moving to a new address and/or school**

Where the parent/carer of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, the school will record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent/carer notifies Godwin Junior School that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, we will record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

## **7. PUNCTUALITY**

All children are expected to arrive for registration at 8:55am. Children can arrive 10 minutes before their registration times. Any child arriving between 8:55am and 9:05am will go straight to their classroom and be marked as late in the register by the class teacher. Any child arriving after 9:05am must go to the school office, ensure they are recorded in the late register and provide a reason for being late.

The register is taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils arriving after the register is closed, which is at 9:25am will be marked as 'U' (late arriving after the register has closed) by the office staff.

Those pupils who are collected from school should be collected at 3:25pm unless they are attending a club or any other after-school activity. If a parent/carer is going to be late collecting their child they should ring the school office. Any parent/carer who regularly collects their child late will be invited to meet with the Head Teacher.

## **8. HOLIDAY ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school every day. We prioritise attendance as we believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions so they can make the most progress possible. In line with Newham Local Authority guidance and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised except in exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Examples below are provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis

In order to help us ensure that our children achieve the very best that they are able to, the Governing Board has agreed that from September 2017 all requests for holiday absence during term time will continue to be declined except in the exceptional circumstances outlined above, and that parents/carers who take their child out of school for this reason may be subject to a Penalty Notice, issued by the Local Authority. This position is similar to other local schools.

The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Requests for leave in term time must be made in writing in advance. The Head Teacher will then make a decision on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

## **9. ENCOURAGING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place where children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is important that the school celebrates excellent attendance and punctuality. We recognise this in a number of ways:

- Praising the individual pupil
- Positive comments to the family
- Recognition in weekly school celebration assemblies by issuing trophies for the best whole-class punctuality records for the previous week
- Entry in the Roll of Honour Attendance and Punctuality Book
- Providing individual pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern with weekly attendance charts to motivate them to attend school
- Awarding 100% Attendance badges every term
- Presenting certificates to children whose attendance that term meets the school's target
- Providing a soft start to the school day to support children to settle in class before learning takes place
- Attendance Matters display in the dining hall - each class is represented and children can see which class is in the lead and which classes need to improve

## **10. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to make sure their children receive an education. They may choose to educate at home rather than at school. Home education occurs when parents/carers choose to assume the responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating their child's learning, in place of school. It is a serious, long-term commitment and parents/carers who choose to educate their children at home must assume full financial responsibility for their education.

The Local Authority recommends that parents/carers wishing to home educate should complete and return a Home Education Pupil Information Sheet. The information sheet asks for educational objectives; proposed resources; and the hours and organisation of learning. There is no obligation on the parents/carers to complete the sheet but it would be helpful for the teacher responsible for monitoring Elective Home Education to have seen this before meeting with the parent/carer and child.

## **Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Reason</b>
/ \	Present in school am and pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed (less than 30 minutes after the register has been taken)
U	Late arriving after the register has closed
M	Medical/Dental appointment
I	Illness (not medial or dentist appointments)
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
C	Other Authorised Circumstance
V	Educational Visit or Trip (including residential)
R	Religious Observance
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age or COVID-19 related
B	Off Site Educational Activity (supervised by someone authorised by the school)
D	Dual Registration
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday ( not agreed)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
J	Interview
P	Approved sporting activity
S	Study leave
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
W	Work Experience
Z	Pupil not on roll

**Appendix 2 – Newham’s Procedure regarding Children at Risk of Missing Education (CME)**

