



Little Gaddesden Church of England Primary School



Attendance Policy

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Vision

Little Gaddesden School aims to encourage all pupils to achieve the maximum level of attendance. To ensure that all our pupils take full advantage of the education opportunities available to them. We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance and punctuality, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time 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

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

Aims & Expectations

- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.
- To keep whole school attendance above 96%

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.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.
- Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.

- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most within school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Make sure staff receive training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.

Headteacher

- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2022 - [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/106561/Keeping-children-safe-in-education-2022.pdf)
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/520811/Supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.
- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with stakeholders. Create a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction

- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring all staff members:
 - treat pupils with dignity
 - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
 - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
 - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
 - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
 - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
 - use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
 - regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff,
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and collaboration with the SENDCo make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME.
- Ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a 10 Day Absence Form.
- See guidance on HCC Grid for form – [Attendance: guidance and statutory responsibilities - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](#)
- Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Herts Grid [Children missing from education - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](#)

Teaching staff

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an

example of punctuality and good attendance.

- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns;
- Informing the Headteacher of any concerns;
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with stakeholders. Create a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

All staff members should:

- treat pupils with dignity
- build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
- take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
- understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
- communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

You should:

- Rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- Follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

Pupils at risk of severe or persistent absence

– good practice recommendations (this list is not exhaustive)

Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps. This could include:

- lesson resources
- buddy support
- one to one input
- meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
- establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
- lunchtime arrangements
- support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support

- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support)
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

Weekly review of attendance by Headteacher with SENDCo, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Initiate absence procedures, which may include:

- letters home
- attendance clinics
- engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
- work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best, recognising potential barriers in hard-to-reach families and find methods that work and are understood
- consideration as to whether further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
- provide regular review of the at-risk cohort
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

Pupils who are persistently absent

- Develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- Identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
 - mentoring
 - alternative provision where appropriate
- Daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support, make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- Regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team (SAPT), external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- Liaison between Headteacher designated safeguarding SENDCo on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- Coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- Work in partnership with SAPT and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- Review and report on the impact of action plans and interventions

Expectations of parents

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's expectations of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- informing the school of any changes to their child's medical needs.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Working with the Local Authority

- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.

Statutory intervention can include:

- Parenting Contract
- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

Punctuality

- The School gates open at 8:40 am, the playground bell is rung at 8:50 am, for children to line up and enter their classes. The playground entrance is then closed.
- Parents will be asked to sign-in pupils arriving after 8:50 am, and pupils will be marked as 'late'.
- The register will be open for no longer than 30 minutes
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will be marked as 'late after register has closed'.
- School may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.

Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence

School is expected to:

- proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
- Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.
- Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.

Pupils who are persistently absent

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

Pupils who are severely absent

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

Staff are especially conscious that pupils who are severely absent are statistically at higher risk of safeguarding issues. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs therefore the school will endeavour to inform all appropriate services, making them aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed. When necessary school will work collaboratively with children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners to provide support

Absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

Part-time Timetables

- As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.
- The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)
- All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable.