

Harewood Junior School

Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: October 2026
Last reviewed on:	New version policy	
Next review due by:	October 2027	
Version update:	New version of the school policy with 2026 updated guidance – GCC skeleton	

Aims and objective

We choose to be responsible, kind and safe.

At Harewood Junior School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. **We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.**

	Morning	Afternoon
Years 3 and 4	08.35 am (registration 08.40)	3.05 pm
Years 5 and 6	08.35 am (registration 08.40)	3.10 pm

Our objectives are to promote regular attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance*, updated July 2026, 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013, as amended

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, and should be read alongside current local authority attendance procedures and the national attendance and absence codes.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, including the attendance baseline improvement expectation set for the school by the DfE, and provide support and challenge on progress against them

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
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools in the Gloucestershire Schools' Partnership and other professional groups
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting that Gloucestershire County Council considers the issue of a Penalty Notice in accordance with the GCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and national framework.
- Authorising attendance certificates for legal proceedings. Where this responsibility is delegated, the designated officer authorised to check, sign and date attendance certificates is L Lennox (headteacher).

The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader) L Lennox (headteacher) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents, including the requirements around sharing the school's attendance policy.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.
- Acting as the school's lead contact with Gloucestershire County Council's Education Inclusion Team.

The school attendance officer S Higginbotham (Business Manager) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data against local, regional and national figures and similar schools to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g. pastoral lead/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to request fixed-penalty notices
- Ensure that any N codes are amended within 5 working days to O code if a reason for absence cannot be established.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office (registration is at 8.40am and it closes at 9am)

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it accurately on the school system
- Referring calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents
- Parents/carers who need more detailed support with attendance should contact A Fogg, Pastoral Lead via the school office office@harewoodjunior.co.uk

School processes for recording attendance and absence

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

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

- Present
- Absent

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 by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35 ready to be registered at 8.40 on each school day.

The morning register will be taken at 8.40 and will be kept open until 9.00. The afternoon register will be taken after a significant break in learning, such as lunchtime, at 1.30pm and will be kept open until 1.50pm. The morning and afternoon registration periods will be clearly identifiable and will be of equal length, unless there is a lawful reason for a different arrangement. Registers will be taken at the same time for all registered pupils in each session, unless different lawful session arrangements apply. When there is more than one afternoon session and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the DfE will use the codes for the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

- *Call the school before 9am to report absence – 01452 525 364*
- *Email the school if unable to call – office@harewoodjunior.co.uk*
- *Inform the school if the absence is likely to be longer than one day and provide a reason*
- *Keep the school up-to-date, e.g. if the child is unwell*

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, or where there are prolonged, repeated or complex patterns of illness-related absence, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide reasonable medical evidence. This may include an appointment card, prescription, relevant communication from a health professional, or other appropriate evidence. We will not routinely request medical evidence and will only do so where there is genuine and reasonable doubt, where evidence will help us understand and support the pupil's needs, or where it informs reasonable adjustments or suitable provision.

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

Where absence is linked to a pupil's special educational needs or disabilities, physical or mental health, the school will work with parents/carers, the pupil where appropriate, the SENCo, pastoral staff, health professionals and other partners to understand barriers to attendance and identify support. This may include reasonable adjustments, a time-limited phased return, pastoral support, an individual support plan, or referral to appropriate services. The school will keep arrangements under review and will avoid using legal intervention where absence is directly linked to unmet needs and appropriate support has not yet been explored.

Remote education will not be used as a routine substitute for attendance at school. Where it is considered, it will normally be used only as a short-term and last-resort part of a planned package of support, such as a reintegration plan, and only where it is in the pupil's best interests and supports a return to regular attendance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)
- We monitor punctuality weekly alongside absence. Where a pattern of lateness develops, we will contact parents/carers to understand the reasons and agree support
- Arrival after the register has closed (Code U) is unauthorised absence and counts towards the national threshold, so a Notice to Improve and/or penalty notice may be requested in line with the GCC Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

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.
- Please contact the school office via the telephone or email.
- Evidence is not routinely requested but it may be supportive in some situations

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 headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as: events that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short and they are decided only by the headteacher or a senior leader deputising.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

The school will not operate blanket approaches that automatically approve or refuse requests for leave of absence. Each request will be considered on its own merits by the headteacher, with regard to the law, statutory guidance and the individual circumstances of the case.

The DfE does not generally consider a need or desire for a holiday, or other absence for leisure or recreation, to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. Absence taken without the school's agreement will be recorded as unauthorised (Code G where it is for a holiday) and may lead to a request for a penalty notice.

Requests must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the pupil normally lives. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least *two weeks* before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office – in person or via email. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Part-time timetables. In very exceptional circumstances, and only where it is in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be agreed between the school and the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally lives. It will not be used to manage behaviour. It will form part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan, have regular review dates involving the pupil and their parents/carers, and have a proposed end date after which the pupil is expected to attend full time. Where the pupil has a social worker they will be kept informed, and where the pupil has an education, health and care plan the arrangement will be discussed with the local authority. Agreed absence under a part-time timetable is recorded using Code C2.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see definition above) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose

parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)

- 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 (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence

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:
 - Contact the Police
 - Complete a home visit
 - Contact MASH via the Front Door for advice and support
 - Contact Education Inclusion Services for advice and support
- Inform the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker, where they have one
- 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. If absence continues, the school may:
 - Contact the family Social Worker
 - Contact the Police
 - Complete a home visit
 - Contact MASH via the Front Door for advice and support
 - Contact Education Inclusion Services for advice and support

Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we recognise and celebrate good and improved attendance. Any rewards are used sensitively and without discrimination, so that pupils whose absence is linked to a disability, a medical condition or circumstances outside their control are not disadvantaged.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Keep parents/carers up-to-date with their child's attendance levels with termly reports, detailing time missed and its effect on learning
- Monitor attendance and absence data across the school and at an individual pupil level weekly
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Monitor attendance patterns for specific pupil groups, including pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, pupils supported by youth offending services, pupils with medical or mental health needs, young carers and any other pupils who may be vulnerable to poor attendance.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to local, regional and national averages and to similar schools, and share this with the governing board, together with progress against the school's attendance baseline improvement expectation.

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
- Provide regular attendance reports to the pastoral team, *class teachers* and the SENDco 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
- The school will also make the statutory returns to Gloucestershire County Council: new pupil and deletion returns when a pupil joins or leaves outside the standard transition times; attendance returns for pupils who fail to attend regularly or who have 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence; and sickness returns where a pupil is expected to miss 15 school days or more through illness, whether consecutively or cumulatively. Attendance data is also shared with the DfE from the school's management information system.

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
- Take part in regular Targeting Support Meetings with Gloucestershire County Council's attendance team, and agree a joint approach with the local authority for every severely absent pupil
- Follow a staged attendance concern process that sets out who takes action, what action is taken and when concerns are escalated. This will include the school's trigger points for early conversations with parents/carers, written communication, attendance meetings, support plans, referrals to wider services, formal attendance contracts and, where appropriate, requests to the local authority for a Notice to Improve, penalty notice or prosecution consideration. The school's current attendance escalation process follows on from this policy.

- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate. This may include an attendance contract, engagement with social care or other services, requesting a Notice to Improve from the local authority, an Education Supervision Order, a penalty notice where the national threshold is met, or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Legal sanctions

- The school must consider requesting that Gloucestershire County Council takes legal action where a child of compulsory school age has unauthorised absence and the national threshold has been met. Notices to Improve, penalty notices and other legal interventions are considered in accordance with the Gloucestershire County Council Attendance pages and the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available [here](#).
- The national threshold is 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- Where appropriate, the school may request that the local authority issues a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice is considered. A Notice to Improve gives parents/carers a formal opportunity to improve attendance. If sufficient improvement is not made during the specified improvement period, a penalty notice may be issued where the legal threshold and evidential requirements are met.
- Penalty notices may be considered where the national threshold has been met for unauthorised absence. This includes unauthorised term-time leave recorded using Code G, and other unauthorised absence recorded using Code N, O or Code U, where the relevant threshold and evidential requirements are met.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty notices may also be issued where a parent allows a pupil to be present in a public place during school hours within the first five school days of a suspension or permanent exclusion, without reasonable justification. These penalty notices are issued under the exclusion provisions and remain payable at £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. They are not included in the rolling three-year national framework for attendance-related penalty notices.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil
- Any person who has care of a child or pupil, for example someone who lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

The most recent version of this attendance policy will be published on the school website and made available to parents/carers. <https://harewoodjunior.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

- It will be sent to parents/carers when their child joins the school, and they will be reminded of it at the start of each school year and whenever it is updated.

- This policy will be reviewed when guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by *the headteacher*. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.