



Gartree High School Attendance Policy

Approved By:	Governing Board
Date of Review:	10 th October 2024
Date of Next Review:	October 2026

Review History

Date of change	Change Summary
10 th October 2024	Amended grammar and inconsistencies

1. Introduction

1.1 Regular attendance at Gartree High School is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

1.2 Gartree believes that regular attendance at school is the key to enabling students to maximise the learning opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential, **belong, achieve** and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 Gartree **values** all students. As set out in this policy, we will work with families and other agencies to identify the reasons for poor attendance and attempt to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 Gartree recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement.

1.5 The procedures for monitoring attendance are outlined in the policy. The Pastoral team work in partnership with all stakeholders, students, parents/carers, all staff, outside agencies to maintain high levels of attendance and support pupils who may be having difficulties in school which may lead to absences.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 17.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

3. Categorising absence

3.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. For a full list of absence codes please see appendix A.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

3.3 Parents/Carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note or email from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers or parents/carers with hearing impairments.

3.4 Term Time holidays and extended leave: Parents/carers are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. **Requests during term time will not be authorised, time lost from education has a negative impact on student progress and achievement.**

In exceptional circumstances written requests for extended leave should be made in advance to the Headteacher. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents/carers must contact the school should any delays occur
- That the student's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected.

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, the school may remove the student from roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the student will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted the absence will be **unauthorised** (G), e.g. this may lead to a referral to the Attendance Improvement Service and a Penalty Notice being issued.

3.5 Religious Observance (R) The school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British Society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent/carer to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's/carers religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absences will be categorised as unauthorised.

3.6 Traveller Absence (T) The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. For specific guidelines see appendix B

3.7 Late Arrival (L): Morning Registration begins at 8.20am for 8.30am registration. Students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close 8:45am. Afternoon school starts at 1.15pm, the register will close 5 minutes into the afternoon lesson and students arriving after the close the of register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session (U).

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the main office where the register will be amended to indicate the student is in school. This ensures that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided. Where possible all medical and dental appointments should be arranged for outside school hours.

When a student is absent from school and parents/carers have not given a reason for the absence, contact will be made on the first day of absence, requesting the reason for absence and expected date of return.

4. Deletions from the Register

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority.
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Death of a student.
- Transfer between schools.
- Student is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and Local Authority have tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team).
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student.
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- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.

4.2 The school will follow Leicestershire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

5. Attendance

5.1 Gartree believes that improved attendance at school can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school community. As such:

- Governor's annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named member of the school leadership team (Mr Carter) to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.

5.2 The school leadership team will:

- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

5.3 The school request that Parents/Carers will:

- Contact the school if their child is absent, before the close of morning registers (8.45am), and in advance where possible, to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note or email where possible.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists, etc. outside of school hours.
- Instil the value of education and regular attendance at school within the home environment.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.

ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

On a regular basis the Senior Pastoral Mentor with responsibility for attendance will provide the following data:

Data	Regularity	Provided to
Daily registers	Daily	Form Tutors
Individual pupil % attendance data	Weekly (Mon)	Assistant Head of Year / Attendance Officer
Less than 93% attendance lists	Weekly (Fri)	Assistant Head of Year / Attendance Officer
Persistent Absence pupils identified from 'sessions missed' data	Fortnightly	Head of Year/ Assistant Head of Year / Attendance Officer / Assistant Headteacher
Reasons for absence	Half termly	Assistant Head of Year / Head of Year/ Attendance Officer

On a weekly basis the Attendance Officer, in consultation with appropriate agencies, identify whether a student's attendance has improved, deteriorated or stayed the same.

The student data will be used to trigger school intervention to promote improved attendance as required.

Attendance data is also used to identify emerging patterns or trends of absence to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and therefore attainment.

The school will share attendance data with the DFE and the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

- The school also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and Children In Care.
- The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.
- Support offered to families will be centred around the students 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, the school will consider a referral to the Attendance Improvement Service and the use of legal sanctions.

Appendix A**ABSENCE CODES**

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc.)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence

U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Education visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school	Not counted in possible
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible

Appendix B

TRAVELLER ABSENCE

To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending School as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at School.

When in or around Leicestershire, if a family can reasonably travel back to the school then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

The school will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at the school will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their School of usual attendance.

The school can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

The school will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited School
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a School and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending School, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Appendix c

DFE. 2022 - Working together to improve attendance. 13

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also, in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Section 2: Expectations of schools

DFE 2022: To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe. Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promote the benefits of high attendance.

Alternative Provision and Part-Time Tables

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the school's policy Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at school.

In all cases, schools should be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and they should talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

