



Attendance & Holiday Leave Policy

Approved by: Headteacher & SLT

Last reviewed: September 2023

Next review: July 2025

At Gaskell Community Primary School it is important that parents consider carefully the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on course work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying in final years.

Legal Requirements:

The school adheres to the legal requirements laid down by the DFE and:

- is open to all pupils for 380 sessions each school year
- maintains computerised attendance registers in accordance with regulations
- accurately records and monitors all absenteeism and lateness
- clearly distinguishes between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DFE
- submits absence returns and publishes information relating to levels of attendance and absence and includes details of these in the school's prospectus and annual report
- sets annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations

Staff Responsibilities:

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and will:

- regularly communicate attendance information to parents through the school website, through newsletters, through parents' evenings or through other media
- collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individuals, classes, year groups and the whole school
- provide clear guidance to staff on the practice of registration and on such connected issues as the appropriate categorisation of absence (see Appendix 1)
- identify clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness (allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities)
- make provision for first-day of absence contact in relation to pupils who are known to be poor attendees or who might otherwise be considered to be at risk
- identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially persistent absenteeism

- provide for a clear and unambiguous hierarchy of sanctions
- develop strategies which recognise and celebrate pupils' attendance achievements
- set up effective networks for liaising with other involved agencies and services such as Educational Social Workers (ESW)
- stress to parents the importance of continuity of learning, particularly in relation to family holidays during term-time
- help create an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing school-based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism, an inappropriate curriculum, etc.

Class Teachers will:

- take the attendance register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions in accordance with appropriate guidance
- inform the Attendance Officer of any absentees, particularly those who are a cause for concern
- where reasons for pupil absence are unknown, to follow up reasons on their return to school and change the register code appropriately

The Office Staff will:

- take telephone messages from parents/carers on the first day of absence and inform class teachers of reasons for absence so that registers can be changed accordingly
- telephone / text parents to find out reasons for absence when no notification has been given, particularly with children who are a cause for concern
- monitor registers to ensure guidelines are followed and entries are accurate
- produce electronic reports where appropriate
- Maintain a 'late gate' list in order to monitor punctuality
- Collect the names of absentees each morning; patterns will be analysed.
- Report to the Attendance Officer on a daily basis.

Governors will:

- discuss attendance data, including trends and patterns at the Curriculum Committee meetings, acting upon any issues which arise
- ensure that attendance data is communicated to parents through the school website
- review the Attendance Policy on an annual basis

Parents should:

- ensure that their children attend the school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn, as required by law
- ensure that their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning - of any absence
- not book family holidays during term-time; where this is unavoidable, parents should put their request in writing to the Headteacher, outlining the reasons for the absence
- talk to the school if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend so that problems can be dealt with at an early stage

The Law

The law says parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time. In exceptional circumstances, schools can allow parents to take their child out of class for up to 5 days in a school year.

If a child is taken out of school without prior permission from the Head teacher of the school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's record. This may result in parents being issued with a fixed penalty notice of £60 if paid within 28 days, which goes up to £120 if paid within 42 days. If this is not paid within 42 days, parents could face prosecution and a fine of £1000. Please see Bolton Council School Attendance and Penalty Notices.

The Decision

When deciding whether to allow term time leave consideration is given to:

- The child's age
- The time and duration of the leave
- The child's record of attendance
- The child's ability
- Previous term time leave

What Parents should consider

There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term time leave such as:

- Close to exams or tests, for example Standard Attainment Tests (SAT's) in Years 2 and 6
- During the first year at a new school
- At the beginning of a new school term

If you wish to take your child out of school during term time you will need to complete an application form and make an appointment to see our Headteacher, Miss Barlow before you book your holiday.

If school refuses your request for term time leave and your child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted in your child's record and a penalty notice will be issued.