



Attendance Policy

Reviewed November 2024

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

“To strive to ensure that every child receives the best possible education in a secure, caring, friendly and stimulating learning environment.”

Aims and objectives

At Heron Primary 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.

Our objectives are to promote good 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 [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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007, as amended](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

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 8:40am 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

Mrs. Louise Jarvis louise.jarvis@heron.gloucs.sch.uk is our Link Attendance Governor

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Senior Attendance Champion (Senior Leader) Mrs. Claire Brookes is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make 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
- 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.

The school attendance officer Mrs. Deena Waite, Tel:01452 415105 Email: attendance@heron.gloucs.sch.uk is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data 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/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Providing information to the Local Authority when required to support the issue of fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer 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

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 8:40 on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 8:40 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on **01452 415105, selecting option 2 to leave a message on the Attendance line**, or by sending an email to attendance@heron.gloucs.sch.uk. The pupil's parent/carer should state the full name of the pupil, class and illness condition. Parents/carers may be asked to supply a doctor's note/supporting evidence following absence due to illness, such as a doctor's note, prescription, medicine packaging, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Having time off for no real reason is an unauthorised absence. Examples of absences that are not legitimate include:

- Cheaper holidays in UK or abroad
- Staying home because a sibling is ill
- No-one to provide a lift to school

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (before 9.10am) will be marked as late, using code L. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 9.10am) will be marked as absent, using code U. This will affect also affect your child's attendance level. Parents/carers of pupils frequently arriving late to school will be contacted on a termly basis. Persistent arrivals after the register has closed (9:10am) may result in a penalty notice request for unauthorised absence by the Local Authority.

Gloucestershire County Council have implemented a system of fines for parents/carers of pupils who are classed as absent for 5 days or more (10 sessions in a period of 10 weeks). These sessions do not need to be consecutive. The threshold may be met when 10 unauthorised sessions appear in any 10-week period. This can cover terms and academic years.

These absences are a combination of:

G Code absences – Term-time leave of absence

O Code absences – Unauthorised absences e.g. Failure of parent/carer to contact school to advise reason for absence or failure to provide medical evidence, if requested.

U Code absences – Late after registration period has closed (9:10am)

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, by telephoning 01452 415105 or emailing attendance@heron.gloucs.sch.uk

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.

Parents/carers who wish to apply for a term-time absence must complete a **Request for Leave form** before absence, available from the school office. This should be signed by both parents/carers where appropriate.

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 for.

'Exceptional circumstances' will include reasons such as a request from a parent who is in the armed forces just prior to, or immediately after, a tour of duty, or for a child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness or a funeral. Should you feel that you need to make a request that meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances, an application should be made in writing using the form - Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- 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 require 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

- 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, where appropriate the school may:
 - Contact the Family Support Worker or Social Worker if applicable
 - Make a home visit
 - Contact the police
- 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 Support Worker or Social Worker if appropriate
 - Make a home visit
 - Contact the police

Strategies for promoting attendance

At Heron Primary School, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and, therefore, ensures the best life opportunities and chances for children. Because of this, we:

- Ensure good attendance and punctuality is promoted and supported and remains high profile across the school.
- Promote a home / school partnership built on communication and trust.
- Strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children. We work with parents/carers to support regular attendance by communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, and by providing an Attendance Officer who is available to discuss any concerns.
- Attendance is promoted and celebrated through assemblies, displays and Class/ School Dojo.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

Daily

- Ensure registers are complete
- Monitor any unexplained absences

Weekly

- Advise school leaders of pupils absent from school with reasons for absence
- The Pupil Care Team use the attendance data to inform their support of the child and their family, liaising with the Attendance Officer

Termly

- The Attendance Officer produces a report of pupils with 90% or less attendance. These pupils are classified as Persistent Absentees (PA), as they meet the absence threshold of 10%.
- The PA list is shared with the Headteacher who, in partnership with the Attendance Officer, consider the pupils, analyse the reasons for absence and, in the first instance, arrange an Attendance Support Discussion with parents/carers.
- If attendance percentages do not improve, a 'Cause for Concern' letter will be issued to parents
- If attendance percentages still do not improve, an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) will be arranged.
- Contact parents/carers of pupils who frequently arrive late
- Look at and report historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence eg sibling absence/ specific days absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- 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 the national average and share this with the governing board.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, senior leaders and governors as appropriate 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

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
- Make use of the graduated pathway of Early Help to support families to improve their child's attendance where appropriate
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using an Attendance Contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates' Court

Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

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.

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 i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2 – Cause for Concern Letter Template

Full Name – Title, Full Forename, Surname

Address

Address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

Re: School Attendance

Child's Full Forename and Surname **DOB: Insert Child's full date of birth**

We are writing in connection with **Child's forename's** attendance. They have had **Number** of sessions, equating to **Number of** days absence this academic year. Their attendance is **Insert percentage%**, and they have lost **Number of** hours learning. Their attendance is therefore a concern.

We acknowledge that **Forename** was recently absent and are aware of the reason. As a school, we expect children to attend every session available to them so they can benefit from the educational opportunities provided. As such, we are writing to inform you that we will be monitoring their attendance and expect to see an improvement. We also have a duty to inform you that should your child miss 10% or more of the sessions available to them (attendance of 90% or below), they are classed by the government as a persistent absentee.

Should **Forename's** attendance not improve, a school attendance meeting will be arranged which you will be expected to attend. At this meeting we will discuss together any concerns and establish if there is any support that can be put in place.

I would like to remind you that parents / carers have a responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education. Failure to do so could result in prosecution by the Local Authority in the Magistrates Court under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act for failing to ensure regular school attendance at school.

We want to work collaboratively with parents / carers to ensure the best outcomes for our children and are appreciative of your support on this matter. If you do have any concerns, or wish to discuss this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact the school to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Full Forename, Surname

Headteacher