



Oaklyn Gardens, Shanklin, PO37 7DG

Tel: 01983 869910

admin@gattenlakepri.iow.sch.uk

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2021

Signed

Signed

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Date:

Date:

Review date: September 2022

At Gatten and Lake Primary Schools we aim to:

- Work to secure full time school attendance of all pupils on roll.
- Support parents to address, reduce and manage persistent absence.
- Liaise directly with pupils and their families to facilitate effective communication with schools and related services.
- Encourage parents and carers to be involved as partners in the education of their children by supporting and contributing to school life.
- Link with other agencies to support children not attending school.
- Challenge parents/carers when legal obligations are not being met.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children of compulsory school age.
- Monitor and challenge to ensure that all staff in school are appropriately trained in Child Protection procedures.
- Disseminate good practice amongst staff, schools and parents/carers.

Gatten and Lake Primary School has secured a Service Level Agreement with the Education & Inclusion Service (formally known as the Education Welfare Service) and they will carry out and support the above actions alongside the school.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this document the following definitions apply:

Compulsory School Age - Children are of compulsory school age from the start of the term following their 5th birthday. Children & Young People cease to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which their 16th birthday falls.

Parental Responsibility and Definition of Parent - Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Parents are legally required to secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education must be suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special needs the child has.

Parents can secure education for the child by registering the child at school or in some other way. A child who is registered at school must attend regularly and punctually.

Attendance Roles & Responsibilities:

The Government expects:

- Schools and Local Authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- All pupils attend lessons and punctually

School Responsibilities

- Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This will be fulfilled across the school through effective registration systems and active, whole school monitoring of pupil absence.

In order to support and promote regular attendance across the school we:

- Adopt a robust school attendance policy, endorsed by the governing body and actively supported by all staff.
- Publicise and adhere to our attendance policy ensuring it is available to parents/carers, pupils, the Local Authority and the wider community.
- Inform parents/carers and pupils of term dates and in-service days as far in advance as is practically possible & will send reminders of these dates.
- Keep parents/carers informed about initiatives, strategies and progress and/or trends through newsletters or similar.
- Encourage and support good attendance, rewarding effort and achievement as appropriate.
- Ensure staff are trained in attendance protocol and procedures
- Set an exemplary model of personal and organisation punctuality and attendance
- Support pupils with medical needs to access education in accordance with statutory guidance
- Ensure the School Leaders are seen to pay special attention to latecomers to demonstrate that being in school and in class on time is important.
- Welcome back pupils who have been absent for whatever reason with care, devising appropriate re-integration programmes where necessary
- Will follow up unexplained or insufficiently explained absence directly with parents/carers by making a prompt contact to discuss with parents/carers where pupils attendance levels are raising concern
- Where attendance remains a concern following initial contact the school will write to parents/guardians offering support and reminding them of the legal responsibility
- Arrange School Attendance Meetings (SAM) in school between parents/carers, pupil and key staff. These meetings should develop action plans with clear and timely targets. These plans should be copied to all involved, whether they were present at the meeting or not.
- When attendance does not improve sufficiently a referral to the Education & Inclusion Service should be made using the official referral form.

- Assign a member of the Governing Body who takes responsibility for monitoring the school attendance policy and attendance levels within the school.

Our school operates a first day absence procedure to ensure parents are aware when their child is not in school.

Pupil Responsibilities:

Pupils have the right to maximum educational opportunity and therefore are expected to:

- attend school regularly and punctually, with support from parents/carers, school and any agency involved to achieve this.
- arrive on time, equipped and ready to engage in learning
- have due regard to the rules and regulations of the school including those relating to behaviour

Parent Responsibilities:

Parents must:

- make sure their child attends school regularly and punctually
- ensure their child is appropriately dressed and adequately equipped for their lessons which will help build self-esteem and confidence and therefore support attendance
- inform the school on every day of absence, wherever practically possible, of the reason for their child's absence and the predicted date of their return
- inform the school prior to any planned absence
- make every effort to support maximum attendance, by encouraging and supporting their child & working with the school
- try to keep routine medical and dental appointments to a time outside school hours. Authorisation for absence in these circumstances should be backed up with a medical or appointment card
- endeavour not take holidays during school time

Statutory Responsibilities:

Pupil Enrolment Status:

Each School's Admission Register contains the following information for every pupil:

1. The pupils full name
2. The pupils gender
3. The pupils date of birth
4. The date the pupil was admitted to the school
5. The name of the school the pupil last attended
6. Where applicable, a statement that the pupil is a boarder

In addition each school must record the following

7. The name and address of every parent and carer of the pupil

8. Which of these parent and carers the pupil normally lives with;
9. At least 2 emergency contacts linked to the child

Attendance Registers

The register is a legal document and may be used in a court of law. Online SIMs registration documents are used across the school and it is the responsibility of the class teacher to complete. These documents must be available for inspection during school hours. They can be accessed in the school office and an allocated person is responsible for taking a printed copy of the registers outside during an evacuation. Currently the named persons at Gatten and Lake Primary are Mrs N Edmunds or Mr George Wall. Data from any paper documentation is transferred to SIMS in accordance with The Pupil Registration Regulations 2006. All registers, manual and computerised, should be kept by the school for 3 years.

The name of the pupil (in alphabetical order) and admission number should be entered into the register whether manual or computerised.

The weekly heading columns should be completed with the dates.

No pupils should be marked as present unless the teacher is certain that they are in school.

At Gatten and Lake Primary School:

Pupils are able to be dropped off to school from 8:35am when the gates open and enter the classroom when the doors open at 8:40am.

The register is taken at between 8:55am and 9:00am.

The register is deemed closed in the classroom at 09:00am

A pupil who arrives between 9:00am and 09.20am is marked as late when signing in at the office.

A pupil who arrives after 09:20am is marked as late after registers closed (U code)

From 9.30am the school will operate a first-day response call to any pupil identified as absent without reason.

Registers are taken when the class arrives back from lunch break.

The following codes, should be used when completing the Pupil Register:

- / Present during am session
- \ Present during pm session
- B Educated off site
- C Other authorised circumstances
- D Dual Registration
- E Excluded
- G Family Holiday (not agreed)

- H Extended holiday (agreed)
- I Illness
- J Interview
- L Late (before register closed)
- M Medical or dental treatment
- O Unauthorised absence
- P Approved sporting activity
- R Religious observance
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registers close)
- V Educational trip or visit
- # School closed to pupils and staff
- Y Enforced closure
- Z Pupil not on roll

Registration marks will be updated on receipt of reasons for absence and verification of whether the school has deemed the reason for absence to be authorised or unauthorised. The parents/carers' written confirmation, when obtained should be signed and kept for a minimum of 3 years to provide an audit trail to verify the absence code.

Lateness

Lateness will be addressed as a matter of routine by the school. A pupil who enters a classroom late has often missed the principle objectives for the day and must start to catch up so will start the day from a place of disadvantage. Their late arrival is also likely to disturb the class and delay learning for all.

Any pupil who arrives in class after the register is called is marked with code 'L' (present mark). If the pupil arrives after the closure of the registers then code 'U' (unauthorised absence) should be entered. In these circumstances the ongoing lateness can be dealt with by legal sanctions and the school will discuss the case with the Education & Inclusion Service. The school works to the DfE guidance that registers should be closed within 30 minutes of the start of the school day.

Absence from School

Authorised Absence:

- Only the Headteacher may authorise an absence once written confirmation of the reason for absence from the parent or carer has been received. A telephone call conversation is not sufficient.
- The school will usually authorise absences due to illness unless we have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness.
- A range of criteria may be considered when the Headteacher decides whether to authorise an absence. The decision to authorise an absence will usually be made within a maximum of 10 school days from the date of the absence.

Unauthorised Absence:

The following examples are sample reasons given for absence which may constitute unauthorised absence:

- Shopping for school uniform, equipment, shoes, haircuts and any other such reasons
- Looking after parent, siblings or other family members who are unwell or require childcare/supervision
- Looking after the house or property
- Birthdays, including parties or treats
- Staying home to see visiting relatives – unless in certain circumstances having been agreed and authorised in advance with the school
- Day trips
- A family holiday

Family holidays during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 removes the references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold for ten school days. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if exceptional leave is granted.

If the Headteacher grants leave in exceptional circumstances then this will be marked with code 'H' (Authorised Holiday) for the period of time granted by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised leave will be marked with code 'G'

There are 175 non-school days in which holidays can be taken.

The Local Authority expects schools to not grant any period of leave during term-time unless sufficient evidence to support an exceptional circumstance is provided by the parents.

Exceptional circumstances are not:

- A trip to work in the family business
- Cost
- Seasonal work
- Work commitments (exception given to armed forces)

- Family get together
- 'once in a life time'
- Birthdays
- Weddings

This is not a definitive list and when reaching a judgement of whether an exceptional circumstance has been met, the Head Teacher may take advice from the Education & Inclusion Service however the decision remains with the school.

Where leave is not granted but taken by the family, the absence will be unauthorised and the school will implement the Isle of Wight Council 'Code of Conduct under the provision of Education (Truancy Penalty Notices)(England) 2007 (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003' and a referral will be made to the Education and Inclusion Service who may:

- Issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or
- Seek to prosecute parents under Section 444 Education Act 2002.

Truancy Penalty Notices

Truancy Penalty Notices (also known as Fixed Penalty Notices) are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative education provision is provided. The purpose is to offer swift intervention for cases of unauthorised absence before the problem becomes too entrenched.

Parents and children will be supported by the School to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies .

Circumstances where the Isle of Wight Local Authority may issue a Truancy Penalty Notice:

- A Truancy Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Leave of Absence in term-time / Consecutive day's unauthorised absence (No Truancy Penalty Warning)

- Where the authorised absence of a minimum of 10 sessions occurs on consecutive days or is due to an unauthorised holiday.
- If a second leave of absence is taken during term time within any rolling 12 month period without the school's authorisation and there are unauthorised absences of at least 6 sessions in the 12 weeks preceding the Penalty Notice referral.
- Where the school has agreed to a specific number of sessions of leave during term time due to exceptional circumstances, and any additional sessions of unauthorised leave have been taken outside of the agreed period

Under the Education (Truancy Penalty Notices)(England) Regulations 2007 (Amended 2012), Headteachers can only grant leave under exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine whether or not such a request is exceptional and to state the

number of days granted. Each request can only be judged on a case-by-case basis but it is usual that the Headteacher will be sparing in their use of this discretion.

Pupil who has persistent unauthorised absence/lateness – not consecutive (Truancy Penalty Notice Warning)

All unauthorised absence will be addressed by the school with the parent. School will request a meeting with parents where there are concerns over attendance and where absences are not consecutive or there are 'broken weeks'. If thresholds are met the school will engage the support of EWS which may result in a truancy penalty notice being issued.

Absence Management

If a child starts to develop a poor pattern of attendance and continues to have unexplained absences (authorised or unauthorised) then school will make contact with parents to alert them of their concerns, if there is no response from parents and/or there is no improvement the school will invite parents to a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) and may consider inviting the Education & Inclusion Service. If school attendance does not improve then a referral to the Education & Inclusion Service will be made.

Child Missing Education (CME)

A child becomes defined as missing in education when the child has missed 40 consecutive sessions (20 days) but is still on roll at a school, the school has been unable to contact the family and the reason for absence has not been established by the school.

This would apply:

- When granted leave of absence by the headteacher, who then fails to return to school within 10 days immediately following the expiry of the agreed period
- The child has been continuously absent from school for 20 days and there is no reason to believe that they have been prevented from attending due to sickness or any other unavoidable reason
- When both the school and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiries, to ascertain their whereabouts
- When a parent has accepted a place on roll but the child does not attend for the first day or subsequent 20 days (40 consecutive sessions in total)

If a child is deemed a Child Missing in Education then a referral to Education & Inclusion will be made once the following actions have been completed by the school:

- Make on-going attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence, to contact the pupils parents either by telephone or text messaging. This includes emergency contacts.
- Make further attempts to contact the parents, either by letter or by visiting the home
- Contact any other schools where the pupil or their siblings are known to have been pupils
- Check with the pupils peer group to ascertain if they are aware of any change in the pupils place of residency
- Contact any relevant agency, for example the family welfare officer in the relevant armed force in the case of a service child.

For pupils known to be at risk or where safeguarding is a concern the school will action the above and contact the child's social worker at the relevant team directly or Children's Reception Team on 0300 300 0117.

A pupil can only be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Once/if the family are located regardless of which agency they will

- Ensure that the family is aware of their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and make contact with the school
- Inform the Education & Inclusion Service of the whereabouts of the child, who will then monitor the child to ensure that they return to school.

If the child has moved off-island and once the child is located then the school will keep the child on roll, coding the absence as 'C' until the child has a new school place and the Common Transfer File (CTF) is requested.

Pupil Tracking

The maintenance of registers is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Deletion from roll must follow strict guidelines and procedures.

Where a child is known to be moving, the school will contact the school the child is moving to so they can confirm the date the pupil will be put onto their register (agreed admission date, **NOT** the date the child arrives at school). The school will remove from roll on the previous school day to the date the child is put on the register at the new school.

If a child stops attending school and usual procedures to contact the parent/carer get no response, the school will contact the Education & Inclusion Service as a matter of urgency to initiate Child Missing in Education Procedures. If any professionals have a good reason to suspect that a crime against a child may have been committed they will immediately contact the police.

Requirements and Procedures

All attendance data, whether handwritten or computerised will be held by the school office, within thirty minutes of registration. Any changes to the data can be monitored centrally and also guarantee centralised access in the case of emergency.

The school will keep their attendance registers secure and retain them for three years from the last date entry. This includes electronic registers.

Named school staff (Mrs Nadia Edmunds, Mrs Jayne Poulton and Mrs Rebecca Day) will check registers regularly to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the

legislation and the school's policy. They will also analyse the data to identify any patterns of absence which have not already been picked up.

The Education & Inclusion Team

The school commissions the support of the Education & Inclusion Team to support our school in developing and setting up effective systems and structures to deal with non-attendance at an early stage. They will support and advise schools regarding in-school systems as required and challenge practice that is in contradiction to legislation & guidance and work closely with them to change and reflect good practice.

Monitoring this Policy This policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

Please see **Appendix 1** for the Leave of Absence Request Form

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Walking, cycling and scootering to and from School Policy

LA policies:

- Education for children with medical needs who cannot attend school - <https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2129-IW-Policy-Education-for-children-with-Medical-Needs-August-2020.pdf>
- LA code of conduct - <https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Attendance-at-School/School-Attendance>

Appendix 1: Leave of Absence request form

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As parents, you have the legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. Applications for leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and the number of days given determined by the Headteacher.

If you wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child in term time, you will need to complete this form and return it to the school office no later than 14 days before the requested date.

Any leave of absence during term time which is not applied for or agreed to by the school will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to the Local Authority. This may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice (TPN) being issued or Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for failure to secure regular attendance at school (see note below):

Name of Child:	Class:	
I am applying for leave of absence for my child from / to:	From:	To:
Number of school days that will be missed:		
Full names of Parent and/or Carers:		
Home address of Parent and/or Carers:		
This leave cannot be taken during the school holidays because:		
I have requested leave of absence previously this academic year:	YES / NO	
I have requested leave of absence last academic year:	YES / NO	
I also have children at (please name school/s):		
Parent/Carer signature:		
Date of request:		
OFFICE USE		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is	Authorised / Unauthorised	
Signed:		
Date:		

TRUANCY PENALTY NOTICES

Unauthorised absence and persistent lateness may result in the issue of a Truancy Penalty Notice to each parent/carer, for each child for the period of absence from school. This will be issued as an alternative disposal to prosecution for failing to secure regular attendance at school.

The Penalty Notice is £60 per pupil, per parent/carer if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per pupil, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice within the specified time will result in its withdrawal and will result in a prosecution under Section 444 Education Act for the non-attendance where the maximum fine is £2,500 and up to 3 months imprisonment.

Please note there is no provision for payment of the penalty notice in instalments.