



Swindon Village Attendance Policy 2021 - 2022



Governor Committee Responsible:	GSG	Staff Lead	Mr. G. Mills
Status	Statutory	Review Cycle	Annual
Last Review	September 2021	Next Review Date	September 2022

Designation	Name	Date	Signature
Chair of Governors	Mr. R Ellis		
Head Teacher	Mr. G. Mills		

Introduction

At Swindon Village Primary School, we expect every child to achieve 100% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/ carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Attendance is a key part of raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in school.

The government expects that the usual rules on school attendance will apply:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

This policy should be considered alongside the latest DfE attendance guidance and guidance from Gloucestershire County Council's Education, Performance and Inclusion Team:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/attendance/>

Linked Policy: Children Missing Education

Definition: refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'

If a child is missing from education the school will follow their policy – '*Children Missing From Education*' and also the GCC guidance around *Children missing in education*

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/children-missing-education/>

1. The Value of Attendance

Central to our vision is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. At Swindon Village Primary School, regular attendance means that pupils attend school every day. As such, this policy details the procedures which the school follows to promote good attendance of pupils and all other matters relating to attendance/absence, registration and lateness.

2. Compulsory School Attendance

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise (e.g. the parent can choose to educate their child at home).

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until their 18th birthday.

School will enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.

3. The School Day

At Swindon Village Primary School the school day starts at 8.55am until 3.15pm. There is a slight stagger to the drop off and pick to still account for COVID safety measures. There are two sessions each day. The morning session begins at 8.55am and the afternoon session begins at 1.30pm. Attendance is required for the duration of the school day, on any day that the school is open for learning.

4. Registration

The daily attendance register will be taken promptly once the school day starts. The register will remain open for 15 minutes at the start of each session. If a child is not present in the classroom while the register is being taken they will be marked as either late (L) or absent. If a child arrives at school, after the Register is taken in class, but before it closes (9:10am) they will be marked as late (L). If they arrive after the register has closed, they will be marked late after the register has closed (U).

Our registers are marked in a registration book and/or the school online systems in accordance with legal requirements at the beginning of each session (am/pm). The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

5. Authorised Absences

The following are legitimate reasons for absence that may be authorised by the Head Teacher.

- Sickness:
 - The Head Teacher may authorise a child's absence for illness, but may question too many absence days if your child or children are frequently absent for illness. If your child or children are absent for the reoccurrence of the same illness then school would want to work with you as a family to see if further support and advice can be offered through the School Nurse to enable the ongoing illness to be supported within school. In all cases, the reason for the absence must be reported to the school by the parent or guardian of the child before the school day.
- Medical or dental appointments:
 - Where possible, parents should make every effort to make appointments outside of the school day.
- Days of religious observance:
 - This is based on a case by case basis.
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement; family members with terminal illness:
 - School would advise that family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty. If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.
- Visiting other educational settings:
 - E.g. to prepare for transfer to secondary school.
- Participating in performances:
 - In line with DFE guidance - see Child Performance and Activities Licensing Legislation section 3.2 (February 2015) which is available via the link - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-performance-and-activities-licensing-legislation>).
- Educated elsewhere:
 - On certain occasions if it is necessary for a child to be temporarily educated at another school or at a hospital school. This also applies to visits to prospective new schools.
- Serious disruption to travel arrangements and School closure:

- This has a distinct code and there are specific instances where this code will apply. The code should be used at the Head Teacher’s discretion and would apply to a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding. It would also apply to a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption.
- **Exclusion:**
 - As exclusion for a fixed period results from a decision taken by the school, the absence should be treated as authorised.

Note: Completion of an Absence Request Form request form or a letter from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the Head Teacher can decide whether the explanation given justifies authorising the absence. All leave of absence requests should be completed on the Absence Request Form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken.

6. Not attending due to circumstances relating to COVID-19:

- a. From the school year 2020 to 2021 onwards, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is ‘not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)’. This will be coded with an X: *Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)* This code is used to record sessions where the pupil’s travel to or presence at school would conflict with:
 - i. guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care¹² or
 - ii. any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer them access to remote education. Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.
 - iii. where a child is tested positive from a PCR the child will then be coded ‘I’ for the duration of the isolation period.

7. Part-time Timetables

- a. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil’s 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 must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. 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 record it as authorised absence. Any decision to place a pupil on a part-time timetable will be done in consultation with the Local Authority Inclusion Team.

8. Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be deemed to be unauthorised (O) if a child is not present and school have not been informed by the close of the register on the first day of the absence. Parents/carers can inform school by telephone (including leaving a message on the answerphone), by email, or direct contact with the school office or class teacher.

The following reasons will not be authorised by Swindon Village Primary School (this is not an exhaustive list, but will serve as an example):

- Looking after the house, or waiting for an appointment or delivery (eg a utility service)
- Looking after brothers and sisters or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Family Holidays or days out. "The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time" (DfE website May 2013)
- Lack of transport

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 no child may take holidays in term time, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

Parents may consider that a holiday will be educational, but valuable teaching and learning time in school will be missed. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are often unprepared for lessons and struggle to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

Exceptional circumstances are:

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children, whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holidays e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer as to why the family can only take a holiday during the school's term time)
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be referred to Gloucestershire's Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team, who may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution.

The table below identifies the unauthorised codes used in the attendance register.

Code	Explanation	Additional notes
G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	All unexplained absences should be followed up. Once reason is established the register should be amended.
O	Absent from school without authorisation	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	After 9.10am or 1.45pm.

9. School Responsibilities

- Ensuring that registers are marked accurately and promptly every day following the latest DFE guidance.
- Accurately differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence, if, school has not been notified as to why a child is absent. This means school will contact you regarding all your children if they are absent at the same time so you may receive multiple texts if you have more than one child absent.
- Endeavour to establish a reason for absence, but if no valid reason is given the absence will be marked as unauthorised. (O)
- Follow the guidelines set out by Gloucestershire County Council and report any absence that is unauthorised for 10 consecutive days and where a Part Time Time Table is used.
- Contacting parents when the school is concerned about a pupil’s absences and making a record of this.
- Ensure all staff are consistent in applying this policy.
- Advise parents about the adverse affects of absence and seek regular opportunities to promote good punctuality and attendance, for example through – Induction meetings, Parents evenings, Newsletters, Assemblies, on Notice boards etc.
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Set attendance targets for the School and groups within the School.
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child’s attendance.
- Produce and analyse attendance reports with the aim of improving attendance (for either individuals or groups)
- Attendance targets and attendance report cards may also be used for individual pupils who struggle with daily attendance.

- Work within a multi-agency approach in order to improve attendance and support pupils and families.
- Parents whose children's absence falls below 90% are monitored weekly and sent a warning letter with a date to improve their child's attendance. If there is no improvement then an AIM (Attendance Improvement Meeting) is held followed by legal proceedings if necessary.
- Follow our Safeguarding Policy and report any concerns through the correct procedure set out for schools.
- Follow the Gloucestershire County Council Guidelines and report any pupil who falls into the 'Child Missing in Education' category.
- Governors will review attendance on a regular basis and hold senior leaders to account for the level of attendance in school and have an overview of the policy and procedures in dealing with attendance.

10. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to make sure their child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time to get ready and eats a good breakfast.
- Children should arrive in the school between 8.45am and 8:55am, there is an added 5 minutes in the morning where parents may wait on the school grounds before the classroom doors are opened at 8:45am. Any child arriving after this time (8:55am) should enter the building via Reception/Main Entrance and report to the school office as a late arrival.
- The child's name, class, arrival time and any reasons given will be recorded.
- It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to contact the school as soon as possible in the morning if their child will not be attending school.
- Parents/Carers should ensure that their child attends school wearing the correct uniform and brings appropriate equipment or kit and provision for lunch.
- Swindon Village Primary School encourages parents to help their children by showing an interest in school life. Parents are invited to attend all parents'/carers' evenings, parent/carer information evenings, listen to reading and supervision of homework.
- If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the child's class teacher immediately to discuss any concerns. There could be a number of reasons for this reluctance such as difficulties with school work, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important to identify any reasons for a reluctance to attend school quickly and before it becomes a more serious issue.

11. School Procedures to Encourage and Monitor Good Attendance

- The important need for good attendance and punctuality will be regularly mentioned in newsletters and in discussions with parents and children.

12. Monitoring

- School will regularly (typically 6 times a year towards the end of each term) monitor attendance of individual classes and vulnerable groups (eg SEND or Disadvantaged children). Where attendance falls below 95% the class teacher and/or admin team will notify the Headteacher and Data Lead.

- The class teacher and/or the Pastoral Support Advisor will raise the issue with the parents to establish a partnership to improve the attendance. If the attendance pattern continues, the Headteacher will write to warn the parent that their child's attendance is causing concern. This may also include an invitation to the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how school can support improved attendance.
- Through this monitoring, where school becomes aware of a more concerning pattern, they will also monitor more closely persistent lateness and absence.

13. Persistent Absence

- Pupils who are Persistently Absent from School for whatever reason will be monitored on a week by week basis. This is a child who has an **90% attendance** or lower at any given time during the academic year.
- Parents/Carers of a child identified as a persistent absentee will be invited to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) and/or home visit where targets will be set to be achieved by an agreed date (usually 3-4 weeks).
- Other agencies could become involved in this process. Failure to meet the targets set could result in Swindon Village Primary School following the guidance set out by Gloucestershire County Council and a referral made to the Local Authority. Legal Action for Non School Attendance could follow against parents/ carers.

14. Persistent Lateness

- If a pupil is frequently late before registration closes, the matter will be discussed with the parent. The Class Teacher or Pastoral Lead will raise the issue with the parents to establish a partnership to improve punctuality.
- If the lateness continues, the Head Teacher will write to invite the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how school can support improved punctuality.
- When a pupil is repeatedly late after the close of the register (U). The school could follow the guidelines set out by Gloucestershire County Council. The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in due course for Lateness after the register is closed.

Flow Chart of Procedures

Daily

Enter marks for attendance in register
Follow up absences with text/phone call



Weekly

Follow up unexplained absences
Carry out any monitoring (see below)



Termly

Print attendance reports for classes and groups
(SEN, Disadvantaged, EAL)
Inform parents of their child's attendance at
parent evenings if it is below 96%

Where analysis of termly reports identify:

- Persistent lates – monitor daily and inform parents
- Absence falls below 95% - monitor for 2 weeks and speak to parents to share concerns; issue an attendance concern letter if applicable
- Concerning Absence (ie <93%) – parents/carers contacted inviting them to meet with Pastoral Lead
- Persistent Absence (ie <90%) – letter sent home inviting to an AIM with Pastoral Lead & Head Teacher unless the absence can be strongly justifiable and agreed by Head Teacher.



Yearly

Report attendance in Annual End of Year reports