

George Washington Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

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Contents:

Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [Definitions](#)
4. [Attendance expectations](#)
5. [Absence procedures](#)
6. [Attendance register](#)
7. [Authorising parental absence requests](#)
8. [SEND- and health-related absence](#)
9. [Leave during lunch times](#)
10. [Truancy](#)
11. [Absent pupils](#)
12. [Attendance intervention](#)
13. [Working with parents to improve attendance](#)
14. [Persistent absence \(PA\)](#)
15. [Legal intervention](#)
16. [Monitoring and analysing absence](#)
17. [Training of staff](#)
18. [Monitoring and review](#)

Appendices

- A. [Attendance Monitoring Procedures](#)

Statement of intent

Oak Learning Trust and its schools believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- All pupils achieving attendance of at least 96%
- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance lead is Mr. Knight, and can be contacted via the school@gwps.org.uk email address. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance lead for queries or concerns about attendance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Home Visit Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Trust board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Appointing a link governor with overall responsibility to monitor attendance procedures and feedback to the LGB

The headteacher/head of school is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance lead role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Implementing procedures and sanctions, including Fixed Penalty Notices, detailed in this policy.
- Monitoring and analysing data to spot trends and plan next steps
- Work with the attendance lead, if another member of SLT, to ensure staff are fully trained to support children and families with attendance

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day

The attendance lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Implementing procedures and sanctions detailed in this policy.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting, in writing, at least two-weeks prior, leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible, and where not, providing suitable evidence otherwise the absence will be marked as unauthorised
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- Approved sporting or performance related activities.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Severe absence (PA):

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at **8:50am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site at some point between **8:40-8:50am** when the school gates are open. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:30am** in KS1 and **10:50am** in KS2, lasting for 15 minutes. Lunch breaks are staggered with reception going first at **11:30am** until **12:30pm** and Y6 having from **12:30pm** until **13:15pm** - pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:10am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- The morning register will close at **9:20am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:30pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- The afternoon register will close at **1:50pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school. Parents should contact the school by 9am every morning of the child's absence.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance lead.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **85 percent**, the attendance lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school contact the LA. The pupil will not be removed from the register until their destination is known and agreed with the LA attendance team. The school will work with the LA to establish the whereabouts of the pupil who may be classed as missing in education until they are located.

Attendance register

The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.

K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority.
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution.

M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		

G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as educated off site in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher/head of school – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher/head of school, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher/head of school's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher/Head of School **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher/Head of School will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Term time absence for holidays

Requests for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days) within 10 school weeks, consideration will be given if a referral should be made to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued or prosecution where repeated penalty notices have been issued. Where the threshold has not been met in the case of persistent avoidance, for example, repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, the school will have discretion to refer the case to the Local Authority. If in an individual case, the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address.

Legal Sanctions

The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised and support has been provided but not worked or engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence. This can be a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10-school-week period that may span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Since the national guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' became statutory in August 2024, the Local Authority will only issue 2 penalty notices to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable and to provide evidence of such appointments to the school office. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below **96 percent**. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher/head of school – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the headteacher/head of school. The headteacher/head of school will consider the request and will invite the parent into the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunch time and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises. The headteacher/head of school reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child **at the school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in using the lunch time register **at the school office**. A member of staff will be available **at the school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff **at the school office** has given their permission.

The headteacher/head of school reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision. Parents will be able to withdraw their request at any time – the request will be submitted in writing to the headteacher.

Permission will be updated on a **termly** basis – letters will be sent to parents at the beginning of each term to confirm whether they would like their request to continue.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **8:50 am** and **1:30pm**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the **school office** and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils missing from site

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the headteacher/head of school immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms.
 - All toilets.
 - Changing rooms.
 - The library.
 - Any outbuildings.
 - The school grounds.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after **20 minutes** then the parents of the pupil will be notified
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The absent pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher/head of school will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher/head of school will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance lead, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Creating attendance clinics.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in a range of the following ways:

- Phone calls to parents/carers from class teachers or a member of the SLT
- Conversations held at parent consultation meetings with class teachers
- Certificates for 100% attendance at the end of each half-term and end of year
- Class attendance will be shared in assembly and added to a display board
- Class and school attendance will be added to the school's weekly newsletter
- A half-term raffle will be held for those with 96% attendance and those with improved attendance
- Letters sent home to parents

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance lead will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Persistent absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need (CIN)
- Child looked after (CLA)
- Young carers
- Children open to a child protection plan (CP)
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability (SEND)
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading **weekly** check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance lead will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher/Head of School will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance lead will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance.
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances.
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers.
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

The governing board will ensure dedicated and enhanced attendance training for the attendance lead and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **96 percent** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website and weekly newsletter**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the headteacher/head of school. The next scheduled review date for this policy is by **December 2026**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

George Washington Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the SLT and attendance lead detailing **weekly** and **annual** attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the SLT.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the SLT and attendance lead daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes without a suitable explanation after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls below **93 percent**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is a cause for concern and is now being monitored.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below **90 percent**, a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance now persistently absent and is a cause for serious concern. The attendance lead contacts the parents to discuss this.
7. The pupil's attendance is monitored for **two weeks** and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare lead (EWO).
8. After the **two-week** monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the SLT to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to **96 percent**.
9. If targets are not met, the school may make a referral to the EWO. In this instance, education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A **four-week** monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents. If there is no improvement after an additional **four weeks**, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.