The British School

Working together for our children's future

Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Full Governors	Date: Jan 2026
Last reviewed on:	January 2025	
Next review due by:	January 2027	

Aims and objectives

At The British School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

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

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every session of every day that the school is open to them
- Use the Studybugs app to report their child's absence before 8.40 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Senior Attendance Champion (senior leader) is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school attendance officer (admin@british.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and the headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher *(or other member of staff authorised by the headteacher)* when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Recording any absences reported through the office (by exception as Studybugs should be primary communication channel for absences) it on the school system

- Escalate to the appropriate member of staff to provide parents/carers with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken at *8.50am* and will be kept open until *9.20am but no longer than 30 minutes after the session begins or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place.* The register for the afternoon session will be taken at *13.30* and will be kept open until *14.00.*

Absence

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

At The British School, punctuality is important to ensure children can engage fully with their learning. To identify and respond to ongoing punctuality issues, we would follow a structured process that includes tracking, communication, and interventions, aligned with the Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Identification of Punctuality Issues

Daily Monitoring: The school records attendance and punctuality daily, with registers closing at 9:20am. Arrivals after this time are recorded as late, and those arriving after 9:20am (after the register has closed) receive an unauthorised absence mark.
Data Review: Punctuality records are regularly reviewed by the school's attendance officer to identify patterns of persistent lateness (e.g., multiple late marks in a short time period).

Response to Punctuality Issues
Initial Concern and Communication:
If a pattern of lateness is identified, the first step is to contact parents informally, either through a phone call or letter, highlighting the importance of punctuality and offering support or advice. This may include discussions about morning routines or transport issues.

Monitoring Period:
A monitoring period may be initiated, during which the child's punctuality is closely tracked over an agreed time (e.g., 2-4 weeks), with regular feedback to the parents.

Parent Meeting:
If the lateness continues, the next step involves a formal meeting with parents to discuss concerns, emphasising the impact on the child's education, and seeking to understand any underlying reasons for the continued lateness. A plan of action may be agreed upon, which could include a referral to external support services if necessary.

Formal Warning Letter:
If there is no improvement, a formal written warning will be issued, outlining the school's concerns and advising that the situation will be escalated if punctuality does not improve.

Requesting a Penalty Notice
If all support measures have been exhausted and there is no significant improvement, the school may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the GCC/National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

Steps to issue a Penalty Notice:
Threshold for Penalty:

The GCC Code of Conduct typically requires that a Penalty Notice can be issued when a pupil has a certain number of unauthorised absences or persistent lateness (e.g., 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence or persistent lateness within a 10-week period).

School Report:
The school prepares a detailed report of the pupil's attendance and punctuality record, demonstrating the steps taken to address the issues, including the support provided to the family and any communications or meetings that have occurred.

Request to Local Authority:
The school submits the request to the Local Authority, providing all relevant documentation. The Local Authority then reviews the case and, if appropriate, issues a Penalty Notice to the parents.

Penalty Notice Consequences:
The parents are required to pay a fine as a consequence of the Penalty Notice. If the fine is not paid within the required time frame, further legal action may be taken, potentially leading to prosecution.

Ongoing Monitoring and Support:
Even after a Penalty Notice is issued, the school continues to monitor the child's punctuality and provide support where possible to help the family improve the situation. The aim is to work with the family to ensure punctuality issues are resolved and the child can attend school regularly and on time

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

For planned medical appointments parents/carers should complete an absence request form available from the school website or from the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as *situations that are rare, significant, and unavoidable, and where the absence is genuinely beyond the control of the parent or child.*

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 4 *weeks* before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible here *insert where parents can access the form.* The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances *(see definition above)* (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to required them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may *insert your measures e.g., following missing protocols – contact police etc.*
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will *insert your process here.*

Children Missing In Education

A learner missing or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or maybe an indicator of need for early help support. Staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing or are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions. These should be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with 2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable learners.

The British School will follow the guidance detailed in Children Missing Education (2016), Working together to improve school attendance 2026 and Gloucestershire Council policy

for Children Missing from Education. We will comply with submitting attendance returns to the Local Authority within the agreed timescales.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly,
- or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more,
- or who has been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

2.6.1 - Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, The British School, and other key professionals will work together to coordinate a meeting with parents/carers where possible. This would be before a final decision has been made, to ensure the parents/carers have considered what is in the best interests of each child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability, and/or has a social worker, and/or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a child is subject to a child protection plan or has an Education, Health and Care plan this will need to be reviewed with the local authority, working closely with parents and carers.

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 **The** British School will notify the Local Authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register. Safeguarding concerns will be shared with the Education Welfare Service and where required, a request for additional support from children's services will be made in line with the Children Act 1989.

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Strategies for promoting attendance

The headteacher will promote and celebrate good attendance e.g. assemblies, school meetings with parents, displays, transition meetings, rehearsing daily routines.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysis

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels
- Monitor attendance and absence data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to *class teachers* and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

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