Pate's Grammar School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Board Date: September 2026

Next review due by: September 2028

Contents

1. Aims & Objectives 2
2. Legislation and guidance 3
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Processes for recording attendance and Absence 6
5. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing 10
6. Reducing persistent and severe absence 11
7. Legal sanctions 12
8. Strategies for promoting attendance 13
9. Monitoring arrangements 13
10. Links with other policies 13
Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes 15

1. Aims & Objectives

At Pate's, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and that providing a calm, safe and supportive environment where all students want to be is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect students to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open; however, we also recognise that there may be times when students and families need additional understanding, flexibility and support to achieve this. Our first response is always to work with families to remove barriers to attendance.

We work collaboratively with families, school stakeholders, Gloucestershire County Council, Educational Inclusion, and local partners to remove barriers to attendance. Support is offered at the earliest appropriate stage and is proportionate to the needs of the individual student and family.

Through strong relationships and timely support, we ensure parents/carers are supported to meet their legal duty to facilitate their child attending all available school sessions including promoting punctuality to every lesson.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every student 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.

This policy sets out our expectations regarding attendance and explains how we will track and address absence and punctuality.

2. 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 (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Students) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am or as soon as practically possible 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 overcome any barriers to attendance
- Engage positively with the school when concerns about attendance arise and work collaboratively with staff to identify and overcome any barriers.

3.2 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Engage with support offered to help them attend school regularly and punctually.

3.3. The governing board

The governing board 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 students 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.

3.4 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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

3.5 The Senior Attendance Lead

The Senior Attendance Lead is the Deputy Head, Mrs B Morgan (bmorgan@patesgs.org) and is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making 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 students and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students 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.
- Advising the Headteacher when a student's attendance falls to a level below the national threshold for the Headteacher to consider whether to request GCC to issue a fixed-penalty notice.

3.6 The School Attendance Officer(s)

Are 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 Lead
- Working with school staff e.g. pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Senior Attendance Lead when a student's attendance falls to a level below the national threshold.

3.7 Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the School Office no later than 10 minutes into a lesson or form time.

3.8 The School Office

Are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence and recording on the school MIS (SIMS).
- Transferring calls from parents/carers to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents/carers.

4. Processes for recording attendance and Absence

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students 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 student 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 initials 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 (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 7 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students should arrive in school by 8.35am in readiness for the official start of the school day at 8.40am. Students must be in their designated tutor room no later than 8.40am before the second bell. A late mark sanction will be issued for any student arriving after 8.40am.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 2.40pm and will be kept open until 2.50pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

In the event of an acute unplanned absence e.g. illness, the student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

Contact with the school to report an unplanned absence can be by:

- Phoning the school absence line on 01242 538289
- Emailing absence@patesgs.org or
- Messaging via the Schoolgateway App

Please see here for advice from the NHS about when your child kept off school - Is my child too ill for school? - NHS.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. We recognise that illness and other unforeseen circumstances can affect attendance and aim to respond with understanding while fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student'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.

4.3 Lateness

A student 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)

Ongoing punctuality issues will be investigated by the Head of Year of the student concerned. Where patterns of lateness emerge, the school will seek to understand underlying causes and offer appropriate pastoral support before moving to more formal measures.

4.4 Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done via the absence@patesgs.org inbox or telephoning 01242 538289. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Children who are reasonably expected to return to school and do not do so may be coded as a "O".
- The headteacher will only grant a leave of authorised absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

We define "exceptional circumstances" as situations that are unusual, not expected, or beyond the reasonable control of the parties involved. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for purposes of a family holiday in almost all circumstances.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school website, office or requested by email. 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 student not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see definition above) (Code C)
- Parent/carer travelling for occupational purposes – The student is a mobile child, and their parent/carer(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the student is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent/carer(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 student'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)

4.5 Procedures following unexplained absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Call the student'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 student's

emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit and/or alert the police via 101

- 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 inform the Local Authority.

Parents/carers are able to access their child's attendance record online through the School Gateway Portal.

5. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels across Years 7-11 through publishing attendance data on regular published grade card reviews
- Monitor attendance and absence data across the school and at an individual student level
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students 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:
    - Heads of Year, SENDCo and Pastoral Managers to facilitate discussions with students and families
    - Attendance Lead at High Needs meetings to co-ordinate support and monitor processes
    - The Senior Leadership Team and Full Governing Board for monitoring purposes

- All Staff to facilitate discussion on strategies and support for students and their families

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Attendance data is stored on the MIS (SIMS) to:

- Track the attendance of individual students or groups over time

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Student-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.

6. Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Offer a graduated range of pastoral, wellbeing and educational support to help students return to regular attendance, in line with the school's Internal Attendance Procedures

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Formalise support or consider legal sanctions only when supportive and collaborative approaches have not resulted in improvement and there is a lack of engagement

- In conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, a range of measures may be considered including a parenting contract, engagement with social services, requesting a Notice to Improve from the local authority, an Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

- Notices to Improve will be used as a tool to support improving attendance.

Students who have been absent for an extended period will be reintegrated into the school through an individualised program based on their needs. This reintegration will be planned carefully with students and parents/carers to support confidence, wellbeing and a successful return to learning.

7. Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met (this is defined by 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period – as each day has two sessions (morning and afternoon) this will usually equate to 5 school days). Notices to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct: visit Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk) for further information.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent/carer 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/carers against a fixed penalty notice.

The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent/carer 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

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance at school is promoted in a variety of ways amongst school stakeholders.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are reminded of school attendance expectations, the benefits of regular attendance and internal school process annually. Updates are provided with regular reminders via Head of Year Newsletters. Parents/carers are kept informed about their child's attendance via published grade cards and are given an overview of cohort attendance at Parent/Carer Information Evenings, and they are encouraged to contact the school at an early stage if concerns arise so that support can be offered promptly.

Students

Tutors set the School's expectations of attendance during form time induction and support students to understand the emotional and academic benefits to them.

Staff

Staff are reminded of the role they play in supporting attendance and building positive relationships that enable students to feel safe, supported and motivated to attend. Attendance training is provided to staff on school monitoring data and reminders of school process.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and will be reviewed every two years by the SLT Strategic Lead for Attendance.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Information Report

Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

The following codes are our most commonly used codes. A full list of codes and reasons can be found here.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am).	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm).	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival.	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity.	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered.	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview.	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity.	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit.	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience.	Student is on a work experience placement
X	Non-compulsory school age.	Student not required to attend school

Authorised absence

C	Authorised leave of absence.	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment.	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance.	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	

Unauthorised absence

G	Holiday not granted by the school	
N	Reason not provided.	Student 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.	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration.	Student arrived at school after the register closed