



GUILSBOROUGH ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Name	Attendance
Committee	Standards and Curriculum
Owner	Vice Principal (Enabling Learning)
Statutory	No

Date Ratified	Review Date
June 2021	June 2022

COVID 19

An increase in the rates and means of transmission of coronavirus make it necessary to take further measures to reduce transmission. On 4th January 2021 the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown in England to begin on 5th January 2021. In light of the level and seriousness of risk and having considered advice and information from the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies, the Chief Medical Officer, the Joint Biosecurity Committee and Public Health England, the Secretary of State has decided that it is appropriate for most pupils to temporarily cease to attend school. The purpose of this measure is to reduce rates of transmission by reducing the number of contacts among pupils and between pupils and staff at school, and between pupils and others while travelling to and from school and while at home and in the community.

School Opening – Attendance Expectations

Reopening of school to all students March 2021

School attendance will be mandatory again from the March 8th 2021. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

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

Parents/carers should notify the school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff are aware. Please make staff aware if an illness involves coronavirus symptoms.



Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

- The Government now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. However, Guilsborough Academy recognises that:
- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shielding advice for all adults and children will paused on March 31st 2021 subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)
- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

Please see Appendices 1 for information on

Introduction

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Attending school on a regular basis and being punctual is crucial for success. The best place for your child/children to be is in the Academy learning; any absence results in lost learning time.

Missing days of learning in succession (over a period of time) makes catching-up more of a challenge for the student, and often they can find themselves falling behind.

Attendance during one school year	Equals this amount days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent
90%	19 days	4 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and is essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school. Guilsborough Academy has set an expectation of at least 96% for students to achieve.

Guilsborough Academy will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.



All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

We have a duty in law to refer any continual absence of 10 days or more where we have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT). The school may also look at possible safeguarding concerns for prolonged periods of absence.

We are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason including illnesses or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which Guilsborough Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Holidays/Absences in Term Time

From September 2016 the criteria for issuing Penalty notices for unauthorised term time absence changed, so it will now be 10 sessions (equivalent to **5 school days** in a 6 week period). This means that if you book an unauthorised holiday for 5 or more days during term time the Local Authority is asking schools to refer this to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team for consideration of further action. This may result in the team issuing you with a fixed penalty notice. The initial Fixed Penalty Notice of £60.00 is issued to each parent for each child (In a two-parent family with two children this amounts to £240.00).

Penalty notices are also issued for:

Penalty notices for non-school attendance - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more unauthorised absences in a 6 week period.

Penalty notices for term time absence - To issue a penalty notice, there should be 5 days (10 sessions) or more of consecutive unauthorised absence.

Parental requests for time off in term time

Parents/carers may write to the Principal and request time off for their child(ren) from school which may be granted by the Principal. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and this will not include holidays in term time.



Parents/carers should always try to arrange medical/dental appointments out of school hours.

Expectations:

We expect that our **pupils** will:

- Regularly attend Guilsborough Academy according to the published session times – ensuring that they arrive at the Academy in time to be registered at the beginning of the morning session at 8:45 am
- if they arrive late to the Academy but before the end of the registration period, go to their form room where their Form Tutor will record them as late. If they arrive after the end of the form period/assembly session they should go to their first lesson where they will be registered by their class teacher using lesson monitor
- if absent for a valid reason, they must remind their parent(s)/carer(s) of their responsibility to inform the Academy on the first day of absence and to provide a written note explaining the absence upon their child's return to the Academy. The student planner can be used for this purpose. If absent, students should make every effort to access and complete any work they have missed.
- For Post 16 students, attendance is required from 8.45am until 3.15, and all students are expected to fully engage with tutor time, timetabled lessons, supervised study, and independent study periods. Appointments (including driving lessons) should be scheduled for outside of these hours.
- From Term 2 onwards of Year 13, students may be authorised to study at home where their timetable allows. This will be at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form. Students will only be eligible for home study if they have excellent attendance and punctuality, are making good progress in line with their target grades, and are complying to all Sixth Form Policies (including dress code and wearing lanyards).
- If Sixth Form students are absent for a valid reason, confirmation of this from Parents/Carers is still required.

We expect that our **parents/carers** will:

- uphold the Home-School Agreement to ensure regular attendance;
- ensure their child attends the Academy according to the published dates and session times, and that they are equipped for all lessons;
- If your child is unable to attend the Academy, you must contact the Academy through the student absence line at the earliest opportunity to explain the reason why. When your child returns to the academy, provide a written explanation for the period of absence. If proof is not shown your child will be given an unauthorised absent mark on their attendance record;
- avoid any absence from school for routine medical appointments during term time. Students having medical or dental appointments must bring an appointment card or note from their parents/carers, which should be authorised by the Form Tutor. Where possible, every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside of our Academy hours, especially for ongoing treatment;
- not arrange holidays or leave of absence in term time. If there is a need for a student to take time off during term time then the student's parents/carers should write to the Principal to Request the leave of absence. The Academy will only grant leave during term time in exceptional circumstances, in line with statutory regulations.

Note: Parents/carers who remove their child during term time without authorisation from the Principal risk incurring a financial penalty.



The Academy will:

- send out a text message if your child is absent and we have not heard from you, asking that you please contact the academy to explain the absence.
- Phone home on the first day of absence for vulnerable children and looked after children. We ensure that any absence of two days without satisfactory explanation is referred to the EIPT and/or Social Worker.
- accurately record the attendance and any absence of a student; through a system of registering students in lessons and regular spot checks, identify any post registration truancy - informing parents/carers immediately should that occur;
- in the case of known long term absence (with a medical note) : where appropriate, provide work for the student at home; take action to achieve the successful reintegration of the student on their return. The school may seek permission from the parent to seek advice from a medical professional.

When problems of attendance arise:

A staged approach is taken which includes letters and meetings with Academy Staff. This includes Pastoral, Head of Year, Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

Following fixed reviews, if attendance does not improve, or continue to fall further:

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence and appointment cards.
- The academy will contact JOGO behaviour support or EIPT for further support
- Referral to the EIPT for prosecution may be necessary if attendance falls below 90% and is not improving.
- All pupils with a good attendance are rewarded in line with the Academy Rewards Policy.
- Attendance above 96% is expected by all our pupils

Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to a member of the Education Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT) from Northamptonshire County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed.

EIPT are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Northamptonshire County Council.

- Student and also parent contracts are considered in developing an improved attendance percentage for students

References

Further information regarding attendance is published on the Academy website.

Departmental advice on School Attendance, DfE, September 2018, can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/739764/Guidance_on_school_attendance_Sept_2018.pdf



Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Vice Principal
- Attendance Administrator
- Heads of Year
- Pastoral Support
- Tutors

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1.

Student Absences linked to Coronavirus: Guide for Parents/Carers

What to do if...?	Actions needed	Code we record it as	Return to school...
...my child has COVID 19 symptoms.	Do not come to school. Contact the school daily. Self isolate Get a test Inform school immediately about test result.	X	...if the test comes back negative and your child is better.
...my child tests positive for COVID 19.	Inform school immediately about test result. Do not come to school. Contact the school daily. Self isolated for at least 10 days.	I	...10 days after the positive test result and your child feels better. They can return even if they have a cough or loss of smell/taste; these symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.
...somebody in my household has COVID 19 symptoms.	Do not come into school. Contact school daily. Household member to get a test. Inform school immediately about test result.	X	...if the test comes back negative.
...somebody in my household has tested positive for COVID 19.	Do not come into school. Contact school daily. Self-isolate for 14 days,	X	...if your child has completed 14 days of self-isolation.



What to do if...?	Actions needed	Code we record it as	Return to school...
...NHS test and trace have identified my child as a 'close contact of somebody with symptoms or confirmed COVID 19.	Do not come into school. Contact school daily. Self-isolate for 14 days.	X	...if your child has completed 14 days of self-isolation.
...we/my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine.	Do not take unauthorised leave in term time. Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel. Provide information to school as per attendance policy. On returning from a destination where quarantine is needed: Do not come into school. Contact school daily. Self-isolate for 14 days.	X	...the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed.
...we have received medical advice that my child must resume shielding.	Do not come into school. Contact the attendance officer and provide a copy of the letter. Shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again.	X	...you are informed shielding restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again,